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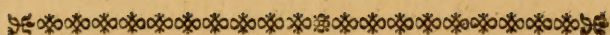
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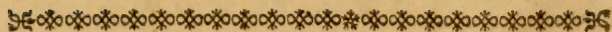
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A
S C H E M E
O F
SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY.



A

SOCHEM E

O F

SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY

Wm. Dobbs
~~*Wm. Dobbs*~~
A *to John Dobbs*

S C H E M E
O F
SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY,
Formed upon the PLAN of the
Divine Dispensations.
W I T H
A Vindication of the Sacred Writings.

By J O H N T A Y L O R, D. D.
Late Professor of Divinity and Morality at the Academy
in WARRINGTON.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WAUGH, at the Turk's-Head in Lombard-
street ; and W. FENNER, at the Angel and Bible in
Pater-noster-row. M.DCC.LXII.

SCHEM E

O F

SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY,

Formed upon the Plan of the

Divine Dispositions.

WITH

A Vindication of the Sacred Writings.

By JOHN TAYLOR, D.D.

Late Professor of Divinity and Member of the Academy
in Washington.

L O N D O N :

Printed by J. Wason, at the Turkey-Head in Lombard-Street; and W. Baskin, at the Angel and Bible in Fleet-Street.



T H E P R E F A C E.

THE Reader is here presented with
T the Plan which Dr. TAYLOR
followed, in leading his Pupils
to a just and rational Acquaint-
ance with the Principles of Religion, founded
upon an accurate Knowledge of the Scrip-
tures.

THE Importance of this Service, and his
Accountableness in a great Measure for the
Event, were Considerations of the last Mo-
ment, and caused him to compose, and de-
liver his Academical Instructions with the ut-
most Circumspection. To his own Judg-
ment, after the strictest Revisal, the Prin-
ciples here advanced, appeared just and scrip-
tural ; but he did not therefore presume they
were absolutely free from Error ; much less
did he think himself authorized, as a pub-
lick Tutor, to impose his Sentiments on
young Minds with an overbearing Hand.

That he might do Justice to his Pupils, and himself, he always prefaced his Lectures with the following solemn CHARGE, which does Honor to the Author, and affords a noble Precedent to Seminaries of Learning.

- I. " I do solemnly charge you, in the Name of the God of Truth, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and before whose Judgment-Seat you must in no long time appear, that in all your Studies and Inquiries of a religious Nature, present or future, you do constantly, carefully, impartially, and conscientiously attend to Evidence, as it lies in the holy Scriptures, or in the Nature of things, and the Dictates of Reason ; cautiously guarding against the Sallies of Imagination, and the Fallacy of ill-grounded Conjecture."
- II. — " THAT you admit, embrace, or assent to no Principle, or Sentiment, by me taught or advanced, but only so far as it shall appear to you to be supported and justified by proper Evidence from Revelation, or the Reason of things."
- III. — " THAT, if at any time hereafter, any Principle or Sentiment, by me taught or advanced, or by you admitted and embraced, shall, upon impartial and faithful Examination, appear to you, to
be

be dubious or false, you either suspect, or totally reject such Principle or Sentiment."

- IV. — "THAT you keep your Mind always open to Evidence. — That you labour to banish from your Breast all Prejudice, Prepossession, and Party-zeal. — That you study to live in Peace and Love with all your Fellow-Christians ; and that you steddily assert for yourself, and freely allow to others, the unalienable Rights of Judgment and Conscience."

Is it possible to adjust the Terms between a Tutor and his Pupils more equitably ? But it must here be observed, that Dr. TAYLOR ever meant, the Liberty he claimed for himself, and allowed to others, should be directed by a serious Frame of Mind, and a real Desire to promote practical Religion. The enlarged View he had of divine things penetrated his own Heart, and had a manifest Influence over his Practice. He laboured to explain and vindicate the Doctrines of Revelation for this Reason, that he might most effectually serve the Cause of vital Religion.

It were to be wished, that those who are Students for the Ministry, who choose to consult his Writings, may imbibe the same Spirit of genuine Piety. This will be a

never-failing Source of Weight and Credit ; and without it, other Qualifications will be insufficient for religious Improvement.

THE Doctor's whole Life being devoted to an impartial Study of the Scriptures, not by Way of Speculation and Amusement, but for the most valuable Purposes to himself and others, it is no Wonder to find him so earnestly recommending them to the serious Attention of Christians. This is the important Subject of those Chapters, which immediately follow the Scheme of SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY.

THE Editor submits the whole (as the Author would have done) to the Candor of every intelligent Reader ; desiring that what is here advanced, may be regarded no further than shall appear conformable to Truth and Scripture, in Subserviency to the best Interest of Mankind.



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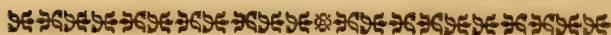
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To be Corrected.

Page 14. l. 19. for דרכי read דרכי
76. l. 29. for מוב read טוב
104. l. 21. for טרף read טרף
l. 24. רפא
108. l. 27. for וחיה read זחיה
148. l. 29. add <i>true</i> before Token



A
S C H E M E

O F

SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY, &c.



C H A P. I.

Of CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

C H R I S T I A N Theology, or Divinity, is the Science, which, from Revelation, teacheth the Knowledge of God, namely, his Nature and Perfections, his Relations to us, his Ways and Dispensations, his Will with respect to our Actions, and his Purposes with respect to our Being ; in order to form in our Minds right Principles, for our Direction and Comfort, and in our Conversation right Practice for securing his Favour and Blessing.

B

h

2 Of CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

IN natural Religion we take our Proofs from the Natures of things as perceived, considered, and compared by the human Mind ; but now we advance upon the Authority and Sense of Writings and Books ; I mean, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, acknowledged by the whole Christian World as a true Revelation from God, and as the Standard of Faith and Doctrine.

THAT God would revele to us, by such Ways as he in his Wisdom judgeth most proper, such things as are needful for us to know and to do, for the Improvement and happiness of our Nature, is perfectly agreeable to his Wisdom and Goodness, who is our Father, and delighteth in our Well-being ; and is also perfectly suitable to our Circumstances, as Mankind are ignorant and weak, and very liable to Error and Deception. It is consonant to the Nature of things, that a Father should instruct his Child ; and that Persons of Knowledge and Learning should teach the ignorant. How much more that God, whose Understanding is infinite, and without whom we can know nothing at all, should teach and instruct us all ?

AND that his Instructions should be con- signed to Writing is also very fit and proper ; as this, in fact, is the surest Method of preserving them in the World. Tradition from one Generation to another is no
safe

safe Conveyance. The Experiment hath been sufficiently tried in the Ages before the Flood; wherein, though Tradition was then greatly favoured by the Longevity of Mankind, yet we find, that both the Religion of Nature and traditionary Revelation were both so far lost, that in the Space of 1656 Years, *the Earth was filled with Violence — for all flesh had corrupted his way upon Earth.* Gen. vi. 11, 12. And both would have been entirely lost, had not God in an extraordinary manner interposed. Likewise after the Flood, notwithstanding any Tradition from *Noah*, Idolatry soon overspread the Nations, and rendered it expedient for God, to devise a new Constitution, to prevent a second universal Corruption and Apostacy. And so false and faithless is Tradition, that for many Ages in the Jewish Nation, and for many Ages under the Gospel, Tradition was, and still is, so far opposed to Revelation, as to obscure and disparage it, and make the Commandment of God therein of no Effect. Insomuch, that had not a written Revelation by Divine Providence been introduced into the World, and preserved in it, true Religion would have been banished out of it.

THE Benefit of Revelation is very great, but then it must be faithfully used; otherwise it will be turned against itself, and made the Patron of Falsehood and Delusion. Which, in fact, hath been the Case. Men,

4 *Of* CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

either weak or wicked, have perverted the Scriptures, and reduced them to a subserviency to either their Lusts, or preconceived Opinions. The latter was remarkably the case in the first ages of Christianity. When any of the Philosophers were converted to the Christian Profession, they generally brought along with them the Schemes and Notions of the particular Sects, to which they were attached ; those influenced their Minds in the Study of the Scriptures, and inclined them to wrest the Scriptures into a Consistency with their preconceived Opinions. Hence it is, that many Notions, inconsistent with the Word of God, and with each other, have been handed down to us from the earliest times under the sacred character of sound Christian Doctrine. And in our own times, we find Men pleading the Authority of Scripture for a variety of opposite and contradictory Sentiments, which therefore cannot all of them be founded upon Scripture.

FOR the Holy Scriptures, being a Revelation from God, the most perfect and invariable Standard of Truth, though written by different Persons, living in remote Ages, during the Space of about 1500 Years, from *Moses* to *John*, who wrote the Revelation ; yet, being a Revelation from God, must be perfectly consistent in all their Parts and Principles, Views and Sentiments, express
in

in Uniformity of Language. For if the Language were multiform and various, the Sense would necessarily be obscure, and the Understanding confounded, and so the Ends of Revelation would be defeated. And if, notwithstanding the great Changes in Customs, Dispositions, Interests, and religious Sentiments, which must, and actually did, happen in so long a tract of time, we do find, that one consistent Scheme, in one consistent uniform Language, is carried on in all the Writings, which compose the Scriptures, we may strongly conclude, that they are a Revelation from God ; not the Produce of human Wisdom, which could never in Ages so remote, and for the greatest Part so illiterate, have combined to carry on a regular, uniform Scheme of religious Principles and Sentiments, in the same Language or Modes of Expression ; but the Inspiration or Dictates of one Spirit, the Spirit of God. Hence it follows,

I. THAT in explaining the Scriptures, Consistency of Sense and Principles ought to be supported in all the several Parts thereof ; and that, if any Part be so interpreted as to clash with any other, we may be sure such Interpretation cannot be justified. Nor can it otherwise be rectified, than by faithfully comparing Scripture with Scripture, and bringing what may seem to be obscure

6 Of CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

into a Consistency with what is plain and evident.

II. THE Sense of Scripture can no otherwise be understood, than by understanding the Force and Import of Scriptural Language. And the Force and Import of Scriptural Language can be settled in no method more authentic, than by collating the several Passages in which any Phrase or Expression occurs. Thus, in every view, Scripture is the best Interpreter of Scripture.

III. FIGURATIVE Expressions should be carefully distinguished from those that are literal ; and *vice versa*. The Oriental, and consequently, the Scriptural Tropes and Figures of Speech, are very bold, and different from the European.

IV. SINGLE Sentences are not to be detached from the Places where they stand, but to be taken in Connection with the whole Discourse. The Occasion, Coherence, and Connection of the Writing, the Argument that is carrying on, the Scope and Intent of the Paragraph, are to be carefully attended to.

V. WE should always interpret Scripture in a Sense consistent with the Laws of natural Religion ; or with the known Perfections of God, and the Notions of Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, which are discoverable in the Works of Creation, and in the present Constitution of things. The
Language

Language of Nature is most certainly the Language of God, the sole Author of Nature. And however the Divine Wisdom may diversify the Circumstances of supernatural Revelation, yet the Law of Nature, as it is founded in the unchangeable Natures of things, must be the Basis and Ground-Work of every Constitution of Religion, which God had erected. Whence it follows, that the Study and Knowledge of natural Religion is a necessary Introduction to the Study and right Understanding of Revelation. And we may further conclude that supernatural Revelation, in all its Parts and Principles, as it certainly is, so it always should be, interpreted and understood in perfect Harmony with natural Religion, or the dictates of Reason.

BUT mistake me not ; I do not mean, that the Law or Religion of Nature is commensurate to Revelation ; or, that nothing is to be admitted in Revelation, but what is discoverable by the Light of Nature, or by human Reason. So far from that, that the whole of Revelation, properly so called, could never have been discovered by human Reason. And therefore in matters of pure Revelation, it is a very false and fallacious way to begin first with what our Reason may dictate and discover. Because our Reason unassisted by Revelation, in such Cases, can discover nothing at all. For instance,

3 Of CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

the Consequences of *Adam's* Transgression upon his Posterity; the Covenant made with *Abraham*; the Nature and Mission of the Son of God; the Grant of Blessings, and of eternal Life by him. Concerning those things, we could have known nothing at all, had not God reveled them to us. And in such matters of pure Revelation, the first thing we have to do, is to enquire, not what human Reason can discover, but what God has discovered, and declared in Scripture. But at the same time it is true, that God hath discovered nothing in Scripture inconsistent with what he has discovered in the Nature of things exposed to the view of all Mankind. And therefore, if we understand any thing in reveled Religion, in a Sense contradictory to natural Religion, or to the known Perfections of God, and the common Notions of Good and Evil, which he hath written upon all our Hearts, we may be sure we are in an Error, and mistake the Sense of Revelation.

I. HE who would effectually study the Word of God, ought, above all things, to be deeply sensible of the infinite Value of true Knowledge and Wisdom; and how absolutely necessary it is to his eternal Happiness, to cultivate and improve his intellectual Powers, in the Use of all those Means, which God hath put into his Hands. The Scriptures are given us, not for Amusement,
or

or meer Speculation, in perusing the curious Remains of Antiquity, the Language, Manners, and Theology of some celebrated Ancients ; but they are all, from begining to end, pointed directly at our Hearts and Lives, to make us wise unto Salvation. There we find every Rule of the most consummate Wisdom, and every Principle of Truth and Comfort ; and the whole is designed to refine our Nature into its proper Excellence, to guide us into the Paths of Purity, Peace, and Righteousness ; to make us happy in ourselves, and a Blessing to all about us, and finally to qualify us for the full enjoyment of God for ever.

But if we are cold and indifferent to any Attainments in true Wisdom ; if we choose to dream, or jest and trifle away the important Season of Life, despising the glorious Advantages we enjoy, while we eagerly pursue the low and transitory things of this World, in neglect of ourselves, of God, and Immortality, of all that is truly great and good and excellent, we shall receive little or no Advantage from any Explications of the Holy Scriptures. We shall not value or relish them, we can have no Ground to expect the divine blessing to assist our Studies, but have reason to fear we shall be left to ourselves, to wander from God, from Truth, and Life, in deplorable Ignorance and Folly. Attend, therefore, to the Voice of Divine
Wisdom,

Wisdom, *Prov. ii. 1, &c. My Son, if thou wilt receive my Words, and hide my Commandments with thee, [lay them up as a Treasure תִּצְפֶּנּוּ in thy Heart] so that thou incline thine Ear unto Wisdom, and apply thine Heart unto Understanding ; yea, if thou criest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding [as we do for those things, which we most of all desire, and most of all stand in need of] If thou seekest her as Silver, and searchest for her, as for hid Treasures : [as covetous Men seek Money, and ransack the whole World for the Treasures, in which they delight. If thus you value, and study to advance the Improvement of your Minds in Knowledge and Wisdom] Then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God : [which of all Understanding is infinitely the most excellent.]*

II. BUT this Sense of the Value of Divine Knowledge, and this Desire to obtain it, must be understood in a Connection with a sincere Endeavour to live agreeably to it. For should a Person, under the greatest Advantages of Learning, and with the utmost Affiduity study the Scriptures, he will be, after all, but a poor Proficient in Divine Knowledge, if he doth not bring it home to his Heart, and reduce it to Practice. It is not Speculation, but Practice and Experience, which renders a Man truly skilful in any Business. So in Religion, no Man can
be

be truly wise and knowing, but he who liveth wisely and virtuously. *If ye continue in my Word* (saith our Lord, *Job. viii. 31.*) *then shall you know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free* [from the Darknes of Ignorance and Error, and the Servitude of absurd Lusts and Passions.] *Job. vii. 27. If any Man will do his, God's, Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* [He shall see it in its true Light, and be convinced that it is perfectly divine.] For (*Psal. xxv. 14.*) *the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.* But (*Dan. xii. 10.*) *the Wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the Wicked shall understand; but the Wise, [the pious and virtuous] shall understand.*

THIS is to make you sensible, that a sincere Desire of true Knowledge is a necessary Disposition in entering upon the Study of the Scriptures; and the Obedience to God's Commands, in the course of a pious Life, is necessary to enlarge and establish the Judgment in the Knowledge of divine Truths.

III. To the effectual Study of Scripture, it is necessary, that our Minds and Hearts be unbyassed, unprejudiced, open to the Truth, and always quite free to discern and receive it. If our Spirits are under the Power of Prepossession and Prejudice we cannot be well disposed for searching the Scriptures,

tures. For instance, if a Person, in matters of Religion and Conscience, is ambitious to gain Reputation in the World, or solicitous only to please and recommend himself to a Party, how should he study the Word of God with the sincere and single View of discovering and embracing the Truth, when he is preingaged, and all his Care is to find what will please his Fellow-Creatures, and suit his own mean and selfish Purposes? *Joh. v. 44. How can ye believe, who receive Honor one of another, whose ruling Principle is the Desire of temporal Honor, and the Favor of Men, and seek not the Honor, which comes from God only, the Honor of a good Conscience, and of upright Conduct?* Or, if we resign our Understandings and Consciences to the Authority of human Decisions and Decrees; or imbibe the Bigotry of a Party, which determines a Person to retain pertinaciously a Sett of religious Notions, without considering, or examining how far they are agreeable to the Word of God, our Understandings and Judgments are locked up, and no longer at Liberty to discover the Truth.

It is owing to this malignant Cause, that great Numbers of learned Men, who call themselves Christians, will not allow themselves to make Enquiry, whether the Worship of Saints, Images, Relicks, Bread, and innumerable other absurd Doctrines, and superstitious

perstitious Practices, are agreeable to the Truth and Purity of the Christian Religion. The Error and Iniquity of this Conduct in Papists we see and detest. But the same moral Cause will in all Cases produce the same Effects. If we act upon the same vicious Principles ; if we indulge the like Prejudices, and in the same Manner wilfully shut our Eyes, we shall be more faulty than Papists, because it is contrary to our Profession, as Protestants ; and shall be equally incapable of seeing the Truth and Glory of our holy Religion. In studying the Scriptures we should always keep our Minds open to Evidence, and further Discoveries of Truth, which is the only way to be more and more solidly established in our religious Principles ; for in no other Way can we *grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Moreover, this is the only possible Mean of reducing the Christian World to Unity both of Hearts and Sentiments.

IV. PRAYER to God, the Father of Lights, the Fountain of all Illumination, is necessary to the successful Study of the Scriptures. *Prov. ii. 6. The Lord alone gives Wisdom ; out of his Mouth cometh Knowledge and Understanding.* Nor hath he appointed any Means, how excellent soever in themselves, which exempt us from a dependence upon his Blessing. All our Springs are in him ; and his gracious influences render our endeavours,

14 *Of the* DIVINE DISPENSATIONS.

deavours, of any kind, successful. And therefore, when we address ourselves to the Study of the holy Scriptures, we should make our Supplication to God, that he would *open our Eyes; that we may behold wondrous things out of his Law.* Or, in the Apostle's Words, (*Ephes. i. 17, 18.*) *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, would give unto us the Spirit of Wisdom, and Revelation, in the Knowledge of him; that the Eyes of our Understanding being enlightened, we may have just apprehensions of the Riches of his Wisdom and Grace, and that our Hearts may be duly impressed with a deep and lasting Sense of them.*

C H A P. II.

Of the Divine Dispensations, in Scripture called the WAYS and WORKS of God.

THE *Ways of God* אֱלֹהִים דְּרָכָיו frequently signify the Rules of Life, which he hath given us to observe. *Psal. cxix. 3. They also do no Iniquity; they walk in his Ways, i. e. in the Law of the Lord, Ver. 1. And the Works מַעֲשֵׂים of God* may signify the meer Operations and Productions of his Power. But both these Words have a more restricted and emphatical Signification. דֶּרֶךְ *a Way*, signifieth
also

also a Course of Action, a Custom, Constitution or Institution, which any Person, or Number of Persons form to themselves. *Prov. viii. 22. The Lord possessed me, Wisdom, in the Beginning of his Way, before his Works of old.* *Prov. xii. 26. The Way of the Wicked, their Course of Action, seduceth them.* *Hos. x. 13. Because thou didst trust in thy Way, the Schemes and Methods, political or religious, of thy own devising, and in the Multitude of thy mighty Men.* *Amos viii. 14. The Manner, the Way, i. e. the religious Constitution, of Beersheba liveth, subsists, flourisheth, notwithstanding the Opposition made to it.* *הָשִׁיב* too signifies to constitute, ordain, appoint, dispose. *Num. xxviii. 6. 2 Chron. ii. 11. Psal. civ. 19. Eccl. iii. 11.*

HENCE *Ways* and *Works* signify the Appointments, Constitutions, or Dispensations of God. By which are meant, “ The “ Schemes or Methods devised or contrived “ by the Wisdom and Goodness of God, “ to discover, or shew himself, his Nature “ and Will, his Beneficence, Holiness and “ Justice to the Minds of his rational Creatures, for their Instruction, Discipline and “ Reformation, in order to promote their “ Happiness.” These are the great Ends of the Divine Dispensations ; and these the principal Points to be attended to, in the Explications of them.

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THE great God, for ever to be adored, hath actually given Existence to a World of moral Agents, such as we are. He therefore is our Father, and we are his Offspring, whom he hath created in Love, that in a right and virtuous Use of our rational Powers, we may be qualified for Honor and Enjoyment in the heavenly World. This seems to be the highest Design the divine Goodness can form, and the highest Excellency to which our Nature can attain. And this may be considered as the Basis of all the Divine Dispensations from the beginning of the World. For without pious and virtuous Dispositions we cannot be qualified for Honor and Enjoyment. But pious and virtuous Dispositions cannot be forced upon us, by any external Power whatever ; they must, in some degree, be the Effect of our own Attention and Choice. It is, therefore, becoming the Father of our Spirits, and suitable to Beings of our Capacities and Circumstances, that proper Means be provided for our Instruction and Discipline. For instance, as God is not the Object of any of our Senses, and can be seen only by our Understandings, it is proper that he should set before us in the Frame and Furniture of the World, such visible and various displays of his Being, Power, Wisdom, Justice, and kind Regards, as may engage our Attention, discover his
eternal

eternal Godhead, and lead us to the Acknowledgment, Adoration, Love, and dutiful Obedience of our Creator, Father, and Benefactor. These are the Works, the Dispensations, or Constitutions of Nature ; whereby our Father, as in a Glass held before our Eyes and Thoughts, has shewn himself to us for our Instruction in Piety and Virtue.

BUT besides the Constitution of universal Nature, there are a Variety of Dispensations, which are more immediately relative to Mankind. As the being born of Parents, to supply the several Generations of the World, whence result sundry Relations and Duties ; the being sustained by Food, covered and sheltered by Clothes and Habitations, healed by Physicians, taught by the learned and skilful ; the Infirmities, Appetites, and Passions of our Constitution ; the forming Societies for mutual Help and Commerce ; the Institution of Government, or the Subordination of some to the Authority of others, for preserving good Order, for the Protection of Virtue, and the Restraint and Punishment of Vice. Add to these, Wars, Pestilence, Famine, Earthquakes, and such like Events ; all these may be reckoned among the Divine Appointments, or Dispensations ; some for the Exercise of our rational Powers in right Action ; some for Discipline, Correction, and Reformation ;

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but none merely for Destruction, except where Reformation cannot be effected.

BUT those Ways, or Dispensations, which in Scripture are considered as the great Hinges of Divine Providence, on which his Dealings with Mankind have turned ; or as the principal Events, by which the great Purposes and Counsels of God's Will have been executed, are chiefly to be attended unto. Because right Conceptions of these, under their several Views, Circumstances, and Connections, will greatly contribute to the explaining of Scripture-Theology, and also mark out the proper Order and Method, in which it may be studied. Let us therefore here, at first setting out, take a general Survey of them.

I. THE Creation of the World, as above.

II. THE Formation of Man after the Image of God.

III. MAN being created capable of enjoying the Honours and Felicity of Heaven, was to be disciplined and proved, in order to his being confirmed in the Habits of Virtue and Holiness ; without which, neither Man, nor any other rational Being, can be fit to see, or enjoy, the Lord. Accordingly, the first most remarkable of God's Works, in the newly created World, was to put the Man, whom he had formed, upon a Trial suitable to his Circumstances.

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IV. UNDER which Trial, Man, yielding to Temptation, sined, and so became subjected to the Threatening of eternal Death.

V. WHICH heavy Doom, God, not willing to destroy his Creature, was pleased in Mercy, not only to mitigate, but also, Man having altered his moral State, thought fit to introduce a new Dispensation of Grace, in the Hands of a Mediator. At the same time, subjecting the human Race to a laborious Life, to Diseases, and to Death temporal. And this in much Goodness, to subdue the fleshly Principle, to give a Taste of the bitter Fruits of Sin, to prevent the Opportunities and Occasions of it; and, by increasing the Vanity of the Creature, to turn his Regards more steadily to the all-sufficient Creator.

VI. BUT Men multiplying in the Earth abused the Grace of God, and in about 1656 Years Time became so wicked, that *all Flesh had corrupted his Way, and the Earth was filled with Violence.* Then, to purge the World from Iniquity, and to recover it to a State of Righteousness, God created a new thing in the Earth, and, by a Deluge of Water, destroyed that wicked Generation, preserving the only Family, that remained uncorrupt in the Old World, in order to propagate Piety and Virtue in the New. At the same Time, and for the

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same good Purposes, he reduced human Life into much narrower Bounds.

VII. NOT long after the Deluge, to prevent a second general Corruption, God introduced another Dispensation, by confounding the Language of Mankind ; which divided the World into several distinct Societies, and, consequently, kept them under a stricter Government, and better preserved their Liberties, than if the World had been one great Empire.

VIII. THUS the Outrage of Violence and Rapine was, in a good Measure, cured. But now Mankind fall into a different Iniquity, namely, that of Idolatry ; whereby, within 400 Years after the Flood, the Worship and Knowledge of the one supreme God was in danger of being utterly lost. To prevent this, the Divine Wisdom erected a new Dispensation by calling *Abraham* from among his idolatrous Kindred, and constituting his Family the Storehouse and Standard of Divine Knowledge. To them he spake and reveled himself at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, and seperated them from the rest of the World, by peculiar Laws and religious Ceremonies, to secure them from the idolatrous Practices of their Neighbours. Thus they became God's peculiar People, distinguished above all other Nations, but with a View to the future great Benefit of all Nations. And to this
Day,

Day, blessed be God, we experience the happy Effects of this noble Scheme, and owe to it both our Bible, and the very Being of the Gospel Church.

IX. THE Family of *Abraham*, by the Divine Conduct, was led into *Egypt*. And when they had been there, under grievous Oppression, 215 Years, and were grown numerous enough to be a Nation, God set himself at the Head of them, as their King. And, in a Country much esteemed for Learning and Arts, whither Men of Genius and Curiosity resorted from all other Parts, upon this Stage, so proper, because so public, God, as the King of *Israel*, combated the King of *Egypt* and his fictitious Gods, and displayed his infinitely superior Power both to destroy and to save, by many Plagues inflicted upon the Land of *Egypt*, and by bringing out the *Israelites* in Opposition to all the Forces of the King, and all the Obstacles of Nature, and settling them, after they had been sufficiently disciplined in the Wilderness, in the Land of *Canaan*. Here God set up his peculiar Kingdom amongst them, and they alone of all the Nations of the Earth were the Subjects of it, and happy in its singular Privileges and Blessings ; but, at the same time, were exercised with various providential Dispensations. The general Rule of which was this ; while they adhered to the Worship of the true God,

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they were always prosperous, when they declined to Idolatry, they were either oppressed at Home, or carried captive into other Countries.

X. THE long Captivity in *Babylon* was not only a Punishment to the *Jews*, but also a Mean of publishing the Knowledge of the true God over all the *Babylonish* Empire, as appears very evidently in the Book of *Daniel*. And the Division of the *Grecian* Empire, which put an End to the *Persian*, after the Death of *Alexander*, caused a new Dispersion of the *Jews*, especially into *Asia minor*, *Syria*, *Egypt*, *Cyrene*, and *Lybia*, where their Synagogues were very common. And lastly, when they were subjected to the *Roman* Power, their God and Religion became more known over all the *Roman* Empire. Thus the Way for the Kingdom of the *Messiah* was gradually prepared. For though the Knowledge of God, received from the *Jews*, made no public Reformation of Pagan Idolatry, yet it greatly disposed Men to receive the Gospel when it should be preached unto them. Some became *Jews*, many renounced Idolatry, and worshiped no other but the living and true God, who, in the Acts of the Apostles, are called, *devout Profelytes, Greeks, those that feared God*.

XI. THUS we are brought to the *Coming of Christ*, who came in the *fulness of Time* ;
for

for he came as soon as God, by the various Methods of his Providence, had prepared the World to receive him. When God *had made ready a People prepared for him*, then Christ came, and fully explained the Nature, Laws, Extent, and Glory of the Kingdom of God, and fulfilled the great and most excellent Designs of Divine Wisdom, by giving himself a Sacrifice and Propitiation for the Sin of the World.

XII. THEN the great Mystery of God, the Calling of other Nations, besides the *Jews*, into his Kingdom and Church, was opened, and made manifest by the Preaching of the Gospel. For which Purpose, he sent out his Apostles, furnished with proper Powers and Credentials, especially the Gift of Tongues, whereby they were inabled to communicate the wonderful things of God to People of different Countries. And by this Means, the glad Tidings of Salvation, and the glorious Light and Privileges of the Gospel, have reached even to us in *Great-Britain*, who dwell in the uttermost Parts of the Earth.

XIII. BUT as *Christ* came to restore, to explain, and by the most glorious Discoveries, and the richest Promises, to inforce the Law of Nature, the true Religion of all Nations ; and consequently, as his Design was to erect an universal Religion, which should recommend itself to all People, under

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der their several political Distinctions, and which, therefore, was to interfere with no political Establishments, but should leave them, in every Country, just as it found them, teaching the Nations only to observe the eternal Rules of Righteousness in the Hope of eternal Life ; I say, upon this grand, noble, and extensive plan, the *Jewish* Polity would be sunk to a level with all other national Governments ; and the *Jew*, on account of any prior national Advantages, would have no more Claim to the Blessings and Privileges of the Kingdom of God, than any of the *Gentiles*, or Nations, who, in any of the most barbarous and despised Parts of the Earth, should receive the Faith of the Gospel. For in the Christian Religion *there is neither Greek nor Jew, Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free ; but Christ*, i. e. the Faith and Obedience, or true Religion, which Christ taught, *is all, and in all*, Col. iii. 11. Thus the *Jew* is fallen from his superior Claims and Privileges ; and he falls by that very Method of divine Wisdom and Grace, which brought Salvation to all other Nations. Thus *the diminishing of the Jews is the Riches of the World, and the casting away of them is the reconciling of the World*, (Rom. xi. 12, 15.) or the opening a Door for the whole World to come into the peculiar Kingdom of God,

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THIS is the Idea we ought to have of the Rejection of the *Jews*. The Grace of God was, and still is, as free to them as to other People, upon their embracing the Gospel; but their political Constitution from henceforth gave them no Distinction, or Privileges in the Kingdom of God above the rest of Mankind. And in no long time after the Publication of the Gospel, their Polity and civil Constitution, which otherwise would have remained in full Force, and have obliged them to obey its Laws, as much as the Constitutions of the other Kingdoms of the World obliged their several Subjects, was quite overthrown, by the Destruction of the Temple, and the Expulsion of the *Jews* out of the Land of *Canaan*. Which they have not been able to recover, but remain dispersed over the Face of the whole Earth to this Day. Thus the Gospel Dispensation was erected, and spread and prevailed every where.

XIV. THE next of God's Works was the permitting and managing a grand Apostacy and Corruption of Religion in the Christian Church, foretold by the Apostles, and at large in the Book of the Revelation. After the Apostles were removed out of the World, it pleased God to leave the Professors of the Gospel, in matters of Religion, to their own Ignorance, Passions and Prepossessions. Thus the Christian Faith, by Degrees, was de-
praved,

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praved, till the *Man of Sin* arose, a tyrannical, usurped Power, domineering over, and imposing upon Conscience, forbidding the Use of Understanding, and intoxicating the Inhabiters of the Earth with false and delusive Learning, worldly Pomp and Splendor, religious Sorcery, and cruel Persecution of the Truth. This, as it was the properest Mean of producing the most eminent and noblest Characters, was to be a long and severe Trial of the Faith and Patience of the Saints. In the times of this sad Dispensation, it is certain, we are now living ; but, we hope, towards the latter End of it. Through the whole course of it God hath variously appeared, both in Wrath upon the Corrupters of Religion, and in Mercy for the Comfort and Support of those who opposed it. And thus the Wheels of Providence moved on, till the Morning of Reformation appeared in our happy Land, which, for some Centuries, hath been gradually advancing, and still continues to advance, towards the perfect Day. For a Spirit of religious Liberty, which hath been long oppressed, revives and gains Strength, the Scriptures are more carefully studied, ecclesiastical Tyranny and Persecution, under every Form, more generally detested ; and things seem to have a Tendency towards Love, Unity, and Concord, the most perfect State of Religion in this World.

XV. THIS must give Pleasure to every good Man, and he will chearfully join his Endeavours to bring on the next glorious Dispensation, which we have in Prospect, when the *Mystery of God*, with regard to the aforesaid corrupt State of Religion, *shall be finished*, when *Babylon*, in all its Principles and Powers, shall fall ; when *the holy City, the new Jerusalem*, shall come down from Heaven, and God shall set up a pure and happy State of the Church.

XVI. How long that State will continue, we do not certainly know. Nor have we any further clear Discoveries of God's Works till the awful Day of the Resurrection, when the Lord himself shall in Person descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and the Trump of God. *Then all they that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake*, and shall be judged, *some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt. And they that be wise*, under any of the Changes and Dispensations of this present World, *shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and they that work together with God, and endeavour to turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.*

THUS I have given a Sketch of the Works of God from the Beginning of the World to the Consummation of all things. And very beautiful and surprizing would the whole

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whole appear, could we see them in a full
and clear Light. But before we attempt a
more particular Explication of them in their
several Views, Circumstances, and Connec-
tions, we must make a few general Re-
marks, which will assist our Conceptions
and Enquiries.

C H A P. III.

GENERAL REMARKS *upon the* DIVINE DISPENSATIONS.

CONCERNING the foregoing Dis-
pensations, we may, in general, re-
mark, that as they are devised and executed
by God—

I. THEY are all agreeable to the most per-
fect Rules of Righteousness and Truth. No-
thing false, unjust, or injurious, can be
charged upon the Divine Constitutions. For
(*Deut. xxxii. 4.*) *all God's Ways are Judg-*
ment ; a God of Truth, and without Iniquity ;
just and right is He. *Psal. cxlv. 17.* *The*
Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and holy,
steadily acting according to Truth, in all his
Works. See also *Rev. xv. 3.* And there-
fore they are in perfect Consistence with
each other.

II. THE Ways of God are not to be con-
sidered as the Effect of Necessity, as if the
End

End proposed could not possibly have been otherwise gained ; but as the Result of wise Choice, or Divine Prudence, preferring such particular Methods as preferable to any other ; as best adapted to our Circumstances, or, all things considered, as the most likely to make Mankind wise and happy. For instance, it is by the Dispensation of God, that our present Life is sustained by Food ; not because it is impossible we should live in any other way, for God could sustain our Life in perfect Health and Strength by an Act of his own immediate Power. Again, our Food is produced by the influence of the Sun, by Rain, the Fertility of the Ground, human Labor and Skill ; not because Food could not be otherwise produced, for God could, by an immediate Act of his own Power, create Food for us every Day, as he did for the *Israelites* in the Wilderness ; but this Method of sustaining our Life is a Contrivance of Divine Wisdom ; to shew himself to our Understandings, (for had we been sustained by an immediate Act of Divine Power, we should have been led to imagine, that, not God, but our own Nature, had sustained itself,) and to exercise our Virtue and Industry in providing a Subsistence, and to be mutually helpful to each other. Hence the Works of God, in Scripture, are assigned to his Wisdom. See *Psal.*
civ.

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civ. 24. *Prov.* viii. 22. *Ephes.* i. 5, &c. —
iii. 9, 10.

III. ASSUREDLY all the Dispensations of God are calculated to promote Virtue and Happiness. This is the Line which runs through the whole, as will appear in our future Enquiries into the Nature and Tendencies of each of them. At present it may suffice to observe, that however our Circumstances may differ from those of our first Parents, the End of our Being is the same as theirs ; and we, as well as they, are upon Trial, in order to our having the Habits of Holiness formed in us, and our being fitted for eternal Life. And though it is a sad Reflection to consider, how the Wick- edness of Men, hath from Time to Time fatigued the Patience of God, yet it must give us Pleasure to observe, how his Good- ness hath applied various Remedies to pre- vent, or heal, the Corruptions of Mankind. In what way soever Men have gone astray from him, his Wisdom has never been at a Loss to find out the most proper Ex- pedients to reclaim them. Evidently his Design is to save a sinful World, and to carry Religion both in its personal Influ- ences, and general Prevalence, to the highest Perfection our present Condition will admit*.

IV. THE

* Now, if such a Design shall appear evidently to run through the Books of the Old and New Testament, a
Man

IV. THE Scriptural Dispensations, which have been enumerated, were severally adapted to the then Capacities and Improvements, the moral State and Circumstances of Mankind. The several Ages of the World may be compared to the several Stages of human Life, Infancy, Youth, Manhood, and old Age. Now, as a Man under due Culture gradually improves in Knowledge and Wisdom, from Infancy to old Age, so we may conceive of the World, from the Beginning to the End, as gradually improving in mental and religious Attainments under the several

Man may, with infinitely greater Propriety, suppose the most perfect Drama (where the finest Design is carried on by the best chosen Plot, and by the most consistent Underplots, and beautiful, well-proportioned Incidents) to have been writ by a Number of the greatest Madmen or Idiots, by piece-meal, in different Ages; than imagine a Thread of such an End and Mean running through above 40 Writers, in more than 1600 Years, to be the Work of so many Enthusiasts. Or, we may as well suppose the World to be framed by meer Chance; or the most magnificent, beautiful, and convenient Palace, that the Imagination can figure to itself, to be built by Men unacquainted with all the Rules of Architecture, in several distant Ages, and without any Model to build by, and to be supported by meer Chance, through as many more; as imagine such an Unity of Design and Mean, as I have described, to be the Result of Enthusiasm and Accident mixed together. *Ld. Barrington's Essay on the Div. Dispensations. Part. I. Preface, p. 26.*

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veral Divine Dispensations †. Which Dispensations have been in every Period suited to the Improvements in Knowledge and Wisdom, which then subsisted in the World. *Adam*, when created, may be considered as a Child without Knowledge, Learning, and Experience ; and therefore the Dispensation he was under, was very different from that, which we are under, who enjoy the Benefit and Light of so many preceding Dispensations.

COROLLARY. *A preceding Dispensation is intended and adapted to introduce and prepare for that which comes after it.* Experience is a natural and certain Mean of improving in Knowledge and Wisdom. This is universally true, as well with regard to Communities as single Persons. It is therefore agreeable to the Nature of things, that in a progressive Course of Knowledge, and moral Improvement, what we already have experienced should be a Step to further Advances ; and consequently, in a just Plan or Scheme of Discipline, it is fit, that what goes before, should be adapted to clear and establish what is to come after. Thus Mankind, reflecting upon preceding Dispensations, will

† Ages of a Man. 6. 16. 20. 30. 40. 50. 60. 70.

Ages of the World, 600. 1600. 2000. 3000. 4000. 5000. 6000. 7000.

will be admonished and directed to reform old Errors and Corruptions; and thus, even the monstrous Apostacy of the Church of *Rome* may serve to introduce and establish that most perfect state of Christianity, which we expect will succeed the Dispensation we are now under.

V. ALL God's Dispensations are in a moral Way, and adapted to the Nature of rational Agents. *Exod. xiii. 17.* Force and Co-action destroy the very Nature of Holiness; and therefore all divine Methods of Reformation are so wisely adjusted, as to leave human Actions in their proper State of Freedom. By none of his Works did God ever intend to render Wickedness impracticable; and he hath always provided sufficient Supports for Integrity and Virtue. With this very sentiment Prophecy in *Daniel* and in the Revelation is sealed up. *Rev. xxii. 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.* That is to say, there is no Cure for the obstinately blind and wicked; neither are the Ways of God intended to purify those, who will not be made clean; but, after all that God hath done, *the Wicked* (*Dan. xii. 10.*) *shall be left to do wickedly. And none of the Wicked will understand, but only the Wise will understand. But he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. Hos. xiv. 9. Who is wise, and [for] he shall*
D under-

understand these things? Prudent, and [for] he shall know them? For the ways of Jehovah are right; and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall in them. The Sincere and Upright, who choose the way of Truth, or turn from Sin unto Righteousness, the righteous and merciful God will never forsake. They make a wise Improvement of his Dispensations, and, under all Trials and Difficulties, he will guide and support them; and their Path shall be as the shining Light, that shineth more and more to the perfect Day.

COROLLARY. *HENCE we may conclude — That in computing the Progress of Religion, under any Dispensation, the quantity of Knowledge and Religion is to be measured only by the Improvement of the Righteous; and that the Wicked, how many soever, are not to be taken into the Account, as making any Deductions from it. Or, the Advances of Knowledge and Religion, under any Dispensation, are not to be estimated by Numbers, but by the Proficiency of single Persons, how few soever. Noah, a single Person, was, at the time of the Deluge, the true Standard of religious Improvement in that Age; though all the rest of Mankind were exceeding corrupt and wicked.*

VI. *KNOWN unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World, saith the Apostle James, Acts xv. 18. Then all God's Works*

Works were formed and planed in his Counsels, and lay under his Eye in one comprehensive View ; and therefore must be perfectly consistent. One uniform Scheme must be laid, and one even thread of Design must run through the Whole. They are not the result of sudden, incoherent thoughts ; but a well digested Plan, formed upon the most just Principles by him, who seeth all his Works from the begining to the end. Whence it follows, that if we do not discern one coherent Design in the Divine Dispensations, or if we make any one Part clash with the rest, we may be sure we do not understand them. Goodness was the Principle of Creation. God made Man because he delighted to communicate Being and Happiness. Consequently, Goodness and fatherly Love, which was the begining and foundation of God's Works, must run equally through them all, from first to last.

VII. PREVIOUS Notice was given of some of the principal Dispensations, either for Warning, or to prepare Men for the Reception of them. The Deluge was preached by *Noah* 120 Years before it came to pass. The Jewish Dispensation was predicted to *Abraham* 430 Years beforehand. *Jeremiah* foretold the Babylonish Captivity ; and *Paul*, and *John* at large, predict and describe the grand Apostacy. But the coming of the *Messiah*, and the Gospel Dispensation, run

through the whole, from the beginning to the end, in a less or clearer degree of Light. And it was fitting that this, which is the chief of God's Works, should receive the brightest Evidence from Prophecy. And therefore it was not fit it should be introduced till such time as it had received that Evidence ; which in Scripture is called *the Fulness of Time*, Gal. iv. 4.

VIII. THE Dispensations of God are intended for our Contemplation and Study ; and it is a singular advantage to form right notions of them, because they will tincture our Conceptions of God, and influence our Dispositions towards him. If we judge truly of God's Works, we shall have agreeable and lovely ideas of the Workman. His Wisdom, his Goodness and Truth, will stand in a fair light, and we shall confess him infinitely worthy of our highest regard. Then we shall think of God with Admiration, Pleasure and Delight, (*Psal. xcii. 4. Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy Work ; I will triumph in the Works of thy Hands.*) and shall serve and follow him with willing minds. But if we form such conceptions of the ways of God, as represent them to be arbitrary and tyrannical, inconsistent with all our notions of Justice and Goodness, the effect of sovereign Will, without either Reason or Love, he must stand before our thoughts in the most frightful Colors. The
most

most horrible Gloom will be drawn over the Perfections of the best of Beings, our Minds will be filled with darkness and dread; and, if we worship him at all, our worship and obedience will not be the free and generous duty of Sons, but the joyless constrained drudgery of Slaves.

IX. IT must be remembered, that the Works of God are unsearchable, and past our finding out to perfection. *Psal. xcii. 5. O Lord, how great are thy Works, and thy Thoughts are very deep!* From a just sense of the inscrutability of the Divine Dispensations, the Apostle concludes a Discourse upon the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, with this solemn Exclamation; *O the depth of the riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* Rom. xi. 33. It becomes us to admire and adore the Counsels of infinite Wisdom, and to acquiesce where we cannot gain a full knowledge of them. *Rev. xv. 3. Great and marvelous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty!* We cannot comprehend the Ways of God in their fullest extent, in all their largest views, and remotest connections. He therefore that is wise will not cavil at them, nor foolishly endeavour to pry into them beyond the bounds of Revelation, and of human Understanding.

X. BUT under all our present Darkneſs, and under every Diſpenſation, an honeſt Heart, ſincerely deſirous to know the Truth, ſeriously inquisitive after it, meekly ſubmiſſive to what God hath reveled and commanded, willing to work together with him, patiently perfevering in well doing; ſuch a Temper, and ſuch a Conduct, is the beſt and ſafeſt Guide under every Diſpenſation; will enable us to follow God, to comply with every deſign of his Providence, to overcome in every Hour of Trial, and will lead us to eternal Life. To ſuch a Character, as well as to *Daniel*, (Chap. xii. 13.) it is the language of divine Grace—*But walk thou, thou honeſt, upright Man, walk thou thy way to the end*, take Courage and Comfort, walk on, perfevere in the path of Truth and Integrity; *for*, after all the Trials and Diſquietudes of this World, *thou ſhalt reſt, and ſtand in thy Lot*, the Lot of pious and faithful Souls, *at the end of the days*.



C H A P. IV.

*Of the CREATION.**Gen. I. 1.—26.*

THIS is the work of Creation. To *create* is to give Being to that which did not exist before ; and so, is no Contradiction. That a thing should *be and not be at the same time*, is a Contradiction and Impossibility ; but that a thing should exist now, which did not exist before, is no more a Contradiction, than that my Hand should move now, which did not move before.

THAT there is one first uncaused Cause, from which all other Beings derive their Existence, and upon whom they have their entire Dependence, hath already been proved. Consequently, all Beings, except the first Cause, must have been produced, or brought into Being by the Power and Agency of the first Cause. Not produced, out of Nothing, but out of Nothing besides the immense and unconceivable Fullness of the self-existent Being, who must have in himself the Power and Possibility of all Being ; though we cannot comprehend or conceive in what manner, or by what kind of agency, he createth or communicateth existence to Beings distinct from himself.

OF the Creation of all things, *Moses* in this Chapter has given us a summary account ; not in a precise philosophical man-

ner, but so as to give the Men of that age, in which he wrote, just and affecting notions of this first, and most stupendous Work of God, so far as was necessary to the purposes of true Religion, and no further. It is enough, therefore, that his account is true, so far as it goes, and not in any respect inconsistent with the most accurate Discoveries, which have been made in later ages concerning the System of the Universe, or any part of it.

Ver. 1. *In the begining, &c. The Heavens and the Earth* may comprehend the whole Universe, or *all things visible and invisible*. It doth not therefore follow, that the whole Universe was created all together at once, or at some one period of time. But the meaning is this; at first, when the Universe was produced, it was brought into Being by the sole Power and Wisdom of the almighty and eternal God. This is true, though the several parts of the Universe may have been produced at different times, or at any distance of time from each other; and though God may still be creating new Worlds in the immense Bosom of Space, which is not improbable; I say, it is true, that in the begining of their Existence, whenever that was, God created, and is still creating, them all. The sentiment which *Moses*, I apprehend, would inculcate being this, that the whole Universe of Beings, whenever created, doth not exist by Necessity or Chance;

Chance; but had a beginning, and was produced by the sole Power of God.

BUT, as *Moses* here gives us a particular Account of the Formation of our Earth, this phrase, *in the beginning*, may have a special Reference to the Time, when our Earth was created. The Matter, of which it consists, was produced in the State of a *Chaos*, (Ver. 2.) *without Form and void*, i. e. shapeless, waste, and useless; all the Parts, Solids and Fluids, jumbled together, and surrounded with Darkness, unadorned, uninhabited. But *the Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters*; i. e. the Influences and Exertions of the Divine Power actuated this dark, confused Mass, and digested, and reduced its Parts to the beautiful State and Order in which we now behold them.

ON the first Day, and the first thing after the Production of the *Chaos*, the Element of Light was created. Ver. 3, 4, 5.

ON the second Day was created the Element of Air, or that Body of Air, which we call the Atmosphere, *הַרְקִי"ל* the *Firmament*, or rather, spacious Expansion of Air, where the Fowls do fly, (Ver. 20.) and which is spread abroad above, and all round the Earth, including Meteors and Clouds, which are the Waters above, or at the upper Part of, the Atmosphere, in Contradistinction to the Waters of the Sea and Rivers, which are under it. Ver. 6, 7, 8.

ON the third Day the great God formed the

the Element of Water, by draining off the Fluids of the *Chaos*, and causing them to flow into large Cavities, prepared to receive them ; that thus the Earth might become one firm, compact, voluble Globe, and in a fit Condition to produce Grasse, Herbs, Trees, and Plants, which were then created. *Ver.* 9, 10, 11, 12.

ON the fourth Day God created the Sun and Moon. *Ver.* 14—19. The Sun being the Centre of our System, it seems probable, that the whole solar System was produced at the same time with the Earth, though the Design of the Writer did not lead him to take Notice of the other parts of it. But we have no just Ground, from his Account, to suppose, that all the Stars, which are probably each of them the Centre of a distinct System, were, on this Day, all of them created. Most of them might have been created long before, and some of them since, our World came into Being. For that Clause (*Ver.* 16.) *he made the Stars also*, in the Hebrew is no more than, *and the Stars* ; the Words, *he made*, being inserted by the Translators. And therefore it may be well rendered thus—*Ver.* 16. *And God made two great Lights ; the greater Light to rule the Day, and the lesser Light to rule the Night with the Stars.* That is to say, *the Moon and Stars to rule the Night*, as it is expressed, *Psal.* cxxxvi. 9. The Conjunction *and* sometimes hath the Force of the

the Preposition *with* ; as *Gen.* iv. 20. *With his Weapons.* 2 *King.* xi. 8. *Jer.* xxii. 7. &c.

HITHERTO our Globe, and perhaps the other Planets, might, by the Power of God, be suspended in the empty Space, in a State of Rest. But now, when the Sun, the Centre of our System, was created, and the Earth was reduced to a proper State of Firmness and Solidity, they might be thrown into those regular and rapid Motions, about the Sun, and their own Centres, which, by the same Power impressed upon them, continue to this Day ; and by their exact periodical Revolutions produce that grateful and necessary variety of Day and Night and Seasons ; namely, Spring and Summer, Autumn and Winter ; which are certainly the Effect of the annual and diurnal Motions of the Earth ; and therefore the annual and diurnal Motions might on this Day commence. *Ver.* 14.

ON the fifth Day Fish and Fowl ; on the sixth Day Beasts and Man were created. *Ver.* 20, &c.

THERE is one Difficulty remaining, namely, that *Light* was created before the Sun, *Ver.* 3, 14, &c. Whereas the Sun is supposed to be the sole Fountain of Light, by emitting luminous Particles from its Body. But I suspect the truth of this Hypothesis ; and *Moses* may be found a more accurate Philosopher than is commonly imagined. It

appears from electrical Experiments, that Light is a distinct Substance from all other, as much as Air is from Water ; and that, by being properly excited, it may be made to appear in Midnight Darknefs. Which shews, that it did exist in that Darknefs, previously to its being excited ; and that it was rendered visible by being excited. Consequently it may, and, I doubt not, doth exist, expanded through the whole visible System of things at all times, by Night as well as by Day ; and that the Sun, a fiery Body, is, in our System, the great Exciter, by which the Substance of Light is impelled, and becomes visible. For were there no Substance of Light previously existing throughout the whole System, no Light would appear, though ten thousand Suns should at once be placed in our Hemisphere. Just as the ringing of the Bell produces Sound, not by an Emanation of Particles from the Substance of the Bell, but by exciting the Air, or the sounding Substance, without which the Bell could produce no Sound at all. As the Air will not sound, so the Light will not appear without being

ex-

* THIS Hypothesis, I presume, doth not interfere with any Rules of Optics, the Rays of Light being *excited* according to the same Laws and Directions, by which they are supposed to be *emitted*. The Light of a Candle, upon an Eminence, may be seen at least three Miles at Sea, in a dark Night. Therefore, according to the common Supposition, the Flame of a Candle, suppose
of

excited *. Upon this Supposition the Element or Substance of Light was created on the first Day, and the Divine Power alone might

of one Inch Diameter, must emit from its Body instantaneously, and in every Instant, while it continues to burn, as much luminous Matter, or Substance, as will fill a spherical Space of six Miles in Diameter, or of 113,0976 cubical Miles. Which, notwithstanding the Divisibility of Matter, *in infinitum*, seems to me, to be incredible. It is surely more probable and rational to suppose, that the extremely agile Particles of Light, which fill that large Space, are actuated, or excited instantaneously by the luminous Body.

N. B. Dr. TAYLOR, some time after he had finished this Scheme of Scripture Divinity, met with the same Thought and Reasoning in the ingenious Author of NATURE DISPLAYED; and was not a little pleased to find an Hypothesis, which he judged peculiar to himself, adopted by so deep an Inquirer into Nature.

THAT the curious Reader may compare the passages, he is presented with the following Extract.

“ —* LIGHT is visibly pre-existent to luminous Bodies ; this may seem a Paradox at first Sight, but it is not therefore a less evident Truth. — By Light we do not mean that Sensation which we experience in ourselves, on the Presence of any illumined Body, but that inconceivably subtle Matter, which makes an Impression on the Organs of Sight, and paints on the optic Nerve those objects from the Surfaces of which it was reflected to us. Light then, taken in this sense, is a Body quite different from the Sun, and independent on it, and might have existed before it, seeing now it does exist in its absence, as well as when present. It is diffused from one End of the Creation to the other, traverses the whole Universe, forms a Communication between the most remote Spheres, penetrates into the inmost Recesses of the Earth, and only waits to be put in a proper Motion to make itself visible. — Light is to the Eye what the Air is

“ to

might be the Exciter, which made the Light appear for the three first Days of Creation,
until

“ to the Ear : Air may not improperly be called the
“ Body of Sound, and it does equally exist all round
“ us, though there be no sonorous Body to put it in
“ Motion ; so likewise the Light does equally extend at
“ all times, from the most distant fixed Stars to us,
“ though it then only strikes our Eyes, when impelled by
“ the Sun, or some other Mass of Fire.

“ THE difference betwixt the Propagation of Sound
“ and Light consists in this, that the Air, which is the
“ Vehicle of Sound, being, beyond all Comparison, more
“ dense than the Vehicle of Light, its Motion is much
“ slower. Hence we may account for that common
“ Phenomenon, why we do not hear the Sound of
“ the first Stroke of a Hammer, when at a Distance
“ from it, till it is at the Point of giving the following
“ Blow ; whereas Light is propagated with incredible
“ Swiftnefs, though at some small Distance of Time
“ between its receiving the Impulse, and its Communi-
“ cating it to us ; seven Minutes, according to Sir
“ ISAAC NEWTON’s Calculation, being sufficient for
“ its Passage from the fixed Stars down to us. This
“ difference of Velocity between the progressive Mo-
“ tion of Light, and that of Sound, is sensibly demon-
“ strated by firing a Gun in a large open Plain, where
“ the Spectator, at a great Distance from it, will per-
“ ceive the Flash a considerable Time before he hears
“ the Noise.

“ THE body of Light therefore does either exist in-
“ dependently of the luminous Body, and only waits to
“ receive a direct Impulse from it, in order to act upon
“ the organ of Vision ; or we must suppose that every
“ luminous Body, whether it be the Sun, a Candle, or a
“ Spark, does produce this Light from itself, and pro-
“ ject it to a great Distance from its own Body. There
“ is no Medium between these two Suppositions, and
“ either the one or the other must be true. But to assert
“ the

until the Sun, the instrumental Exciter, was produced.

FURTHER,

“ the latter, is to assert a very great Improbability ; for if
 “ a Spark, which is seen in every part of a large Room,
 “ fifty cubick Feet in dimensions, emits from its own Sub-
 “ stance a quantity of Light sufficient to fill the whole
 “ Room, then there must issue from that Spark, which
 “ is but a Point, a Body, the contents of which are fifty
 “ cubick Feet. How incredible the Supposition !

“ SUPPOSE the Lanthorn, on the Light-house of
 “ *Messina*, to be seen only eight cubick Leagues, of
 “ which itself is the Centre ; it will follow, that an
 “ Eye placed in any Point of those six cubick Leagues
 “ will discern it, and consequently so much Space will
 “ be filled with the Light of it. Now how incredible
 “ that a little Fire, some few Inches in Diameter,
 “ should diffuse around it a Substance capable of filling
 “ eight cubick Leagues ! Suppose the Lanthorn conceal-
 “ ed, and the Light immediately disappears ; let it be
 “ uncovered the Moment after, and it will instantly be
 “ seen as far as before, and consequently fill eight cubick
 “ Leagues of Space with fresh Light ; then how many
 “ times eight cubick Leagues of luminous Matter, will
 “ all the successive Instants of Illumination produce in
 “ one Night’s time ! Sure nothing was ever more incon-
 “ ceivable.

“ ON the contrary, how simple and natural is it to
 “ suppose, that as the Air existed before the Bell that put
 “ it in motion, and caused it to vibrate into Sound, so
 “ in like manner, the Light existed round the Fire of
 “ *Messina*, before the Lanthorn was illuminated, and
 “ only waited to be put in motion by the Fire, in order
 “ to make an Impression on the Eyes of the Mariners.
 “ The Sun and Stars do, by the same means, make
 “ themselves visible, without suffering any diminution
 “ of their Substance, by continual emanations of lumi-
 “ nous Matter into those vast regions of Space through
 “ which we behold them ; God having placed between
 “ those luminous Globes and us, the Body of that
 “ Light

FURTHER, we must remark, that although God is here said to create the World, yet it may be true, that he employed a subordinate Agent in the Formation of it; namely, the Son of God, who afterwards came into the World for the Redemption of Mankind. See *John* i. 2, 3. *Col.* i. 15, 16, 17. *1 Cor.* viii. 5, 6. But though he was the instrumental Cause, yet it is true, that God made all things, because our Lord acted by a Power derived from him. *He that built all things is God.* *Heb.* iii. 4.

So much for critical Remarks. The Subject naturally leads to the following Reflections.

- “ These are thy glorious Works, Parent of Good !
- “ Almighty, thine this universal Frame,
- “ Thus wonderful fair ; thyself how wonderful then !

How wonderful, how immense is the Power, Goodness, and Wisdom, which gave Existence to the stupendous Fabric and Furniture

- “ Light which we see, and which is impressed on the
- “ organs of Vision, by their Action and Influence ; but
- “ does not proceed from them, nor owes its Existence
- “ to them.—The account of *Moses* therefore, as to
- “ this Particular, is agreeable to Truth, as well as an
- “ useful lesson of Caution, when he informs us, that
- “ God, and not the Sun, was the Author and Parent
- “ of Light, and that it was created by his almighty
- “ Fiat, before there was a Sun to dart it on one part
- “ of the Earth, and a Moon to reflect it on the o-
- “ ther.”

ture of the Universe ! I. POWER. How vast and mighty is the Arm, which *stretched out the Heavens, and laid the Foundations of the Earth !* Which sustains numberless Worlds, of amazing Bulk, suspended in the unmeasurable and unconceivably distant Regions of empty Space ; and steadily directs their various rapid and regular Motions ! *Lift up your Eyes on high, and behold who hath created all these things. He bringeth out all their Hosts by Number, he calleth them all by Names, by the greatness of his Might, for he that he is strong in Power, not one of them faileth. Isai. xl. 26.* How powerful was the Command, *Let there be Light, and there was Light — Let there be a Firmament, &c.* By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them by the Breath of his Mouth. *For he spake, and it was done ; he commanded, and it stood fast. Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9.* Thus the Scriptures sublimely express the Exertion of the divine Power in Creation ; as if it were done instantaneously, and with as little Difficulty, as speaking a Word.

II. AND as for GOODNESS, what an infinite fulness of Life and Being, what an immense, inexhaustible Treasury of all Good, must that be, from whence all this Life and Being was derived ! How infinitely rich is the glorious and eternal God ! Out of his own Fulness he hath brought Worlds and

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Worlds,

Worlds, replenished with Myriads and Myriads of Creatures, furnished with various Powers and Organs, Capacities and Instincts; and out of his own Fulness continually and plentifully supplieth them with all the Necessaries of Existence. And still his Fulness remaineth the same, unemptied, unimpaired; and he can yet bring out of his Fulness Worlds and Worlds without End. How immensely full of all Life and Being is the glorious and eternal God! Thus he is good in himself. *And he doth good.* He is kind and beneficent, willing to communicate Being and good. How profuse is his Bounty! He might have kept, as I may say, the whole of Existence to himself; but he has liberally shared it out among his Creatures; and of all his Creatures in this World, the most liberally to us Men. Survey the whole of what may be seen in and about this Globe, and say, if our Maker hath a sparing and niggardly Hand. Say, if we have a churlish and unkind Father. Certainly it is his Pleasure to form Creatures, and furnish them with Enjoyment; and therefore *his tender Mercies must be over all his Works.*

III. His WISDOM appears illustrious in the Variety, Beauty, Exactness, Order, and Harmony, in which God hath formed and fixed the Universe; in the several Capacities and Degrees of Excellence he has conferred upon his Creatures; the proper
Stations

Stations he hath assigned to them ; the Subordination and Subserviency of one to another, which he hath established, for the Regularity and Well-being of the whole. They are all, as they come out of his Hands, just what they should be, adjusted in the exactest Proportions to their several Ends and Connections ; all in every Part and Respect shewing the Workmanship of the profoundest Skill, and most curious Art. The utmost Stretch of human Understanding can reach but a small Part of God's Works ; but they who study the Wisdom of Creation, cannot but admire, and use the Words of the sacred Penman, *Psal. civ. 24.* (where he is surveying the several Parts of our Globe) *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works ! In Wisdom hast thou made them all ; the Earth is full of thy Riches !*

THESE Reflections will (1.) inspire the most elevated Sentiments of the most high and mighty Creator, who *is exalted infinitely above the Heavens, his Glory is above all the Earth*, *Psal. cviii. 5.* *The Lord our God is very great, he is clothed with Honour and Majesty ;* and we should study to magnify him in our Hearts by the most raised Conceptions of his transcending Greatness. (2.) This should also fill our Minds with Joy, and our Mouths with his high Praises. This God is our God, our Maker, and therefore our Father. The first and most pro-

per Notion we ought to entertain of the great God is, that of a Father ; our Father, and the Father of the whole Universe. And greatly should we be delighted with the Displays of our Father's infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. Transported with Joy, by an elegant Prosopopoeia, the Psalmist, in the 148th Psalm, calls upon all Creatures to praise God ; wishing, in effect, that they had all of them Understandings and Tongues to declare, how much Skill and Kindness he has shewn in their Formation and Establishment. Joy and Praise are the Creator's due, and should be our constant Temper and Practice. (3.) He who is the Maker, is also the absolute Proprietor, Lord, and Sovereign of all things ; and therefore hath the first and highest Right to our Reverence, Submission, and Obedience. In which he is infinitely able to support us in Opposition to all human Power and Authority. For *all Power*, not only his own inherent Power, but also the Power of all created Beings, *belongs to God*. From him it is originally derived, and the Exercise of it depends entirely upon his Will and Pleasure ; nor, in any instance, can it possibly act beyond the Limits which he prescribes. Therefore, in the way of Duty, relying upon his Allsufficiency, we need not fear what Man can do unto us. (4.) In our present Situation we are liable to many Difficulties
and

Of the CREATION of MAN. 53

and Distresses, from which we are not able to guard or extricate ourselves ; but the almighty Creator is infinitely able to deliver his Servants from any Danger, and can clear a Passage through all Embarrassments. He can make a way even in the Sea, and a Path in the mighty Waters. (5.) He who from his own inexhaustible Fulness hath brought forth all Worlds and Creatures, is our Shepherd ; he careth for us, and can fully supply all our Wants. (6.) He can fully accomplish all the great and glorious things reveled in the Gospel. He can raise us from the dead, change our vile Bodies, and clothe us with immortal Honor and Glory. This should not seem to us incredible, because he hath already performed things as incredible, and we have constantly exposed to our View Effects of his Power no less wonderful.

C H A P. V.

Of the CREATION of MAN.

Gen. i. 26, to the End.

NOW we are come to the Formation of *Man*. Here, observe, the Language of the Creator is altered. Instead of, *Let there be Men*, God said, (*Ver. 26.*) *Let*

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us make Man, or, we will make Man, *in our Image, after our Likeness*. Q. D. “ Now “ we have formed and furnished the Earth, “ let us make Man, the noblest of our “ Works, to inhabit, cultivate, and enjoy “ it.” The superior Excellency of the human Nature is signified by the distinguished Manner in which God is represented as addressing himself to the Formation of Man.

THE plural Number is used, [*And Gods said, let us make Man*] but, according to the Genius of the Hebrew Language, this is only a magnificent Way of expressing the Majesty of God; and amounts to no more than this, *And God said, I will make Man*. So *Gen. xi. 7. Go to, let us go down*, i. e. I will go down. Thus God is called *our Makers*, *Job xxxv. 10. Psal. cxlix. 2. Thy Creators*, *Eccl. xii. 1. Thy Makers is thy Husbands*, *Isai. liv. 5.* which are all to be understood, and are rendered in the singular Number. “ Nouns appellative denoting “ Dominion, according to the Hebrew Idiom, are put in the Plural instead of the “ Singular.” Should it be supposed, that the great God here speaks to some other Being or Beings besides himself, it must be to some subordinate Beings; for neither this, nor any other Passage of Scripture, can justly be explained inconsistently with the Unity, Simplicity, or Singleness of the Divine Nature.

Ver.

Ver. 26. LET us make Man in our Image, [Heb. in the Sketch or Shadow of us] after, or like, our Likeness. These Words, with respect to God, are diminutive, and denote, that the most perfect Endowments of the human Nature are but a Sketch, a Shadow, or something resembling the Likeness of God. And yet, with respect to other Creatures on Earth, it speaks high Distinction, and Superiority. For this Sketch of the Image of God in Man must include, 1. The noble Faculties of his Mind ; Understanding and Will, or Freedom of Choice, for the Government of all his Actions and Passions, and his continual Improvement in Wisdom, Purity, and Happiness. 2. His Dominion over the inferior Creatures, expressly mentioned, *Ver. 26, 28.* By which he is God's Representative, or Viceroy upon Earth.

BUT Divines have understood this Image of God, as consisting in Righteousness and true Holiness ; which they affirm, were *created with Adam.* Meaning, not that *Adam* was created with such Powers, as rendered him capable of acquiring Righteousness and Holiness, but that he was *made* in this Image of God ; it was *concreated* with him, or *wrought into his Nature*, at the same time that it was created ; and so belonged to it as a natural Faculty or Instinct. This they

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call *original Righteousness*, which they ground principally upon the two following Passages. Col. iii. 9, 10. *Lye not one to another, seeing that you have [by your Christian Profession] put off the old Man with his Deeds ; and have put on the new Man, which is renewed in Knowledge after the Image of him that created him.* Ephes. iv. 22, 23, 24. *That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts : and be renewed in the Spirit of your Mind ; and that ye put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteousness, and true Holiness.* All this is supposed to relate to *Adam's* being originally created in the Image of God.

THE *old Man*, say they, is a corrupt Nature derived from *Adam* ; and the *new Man*, is fallen Man restored to the primitive Temper, or to that Righteousness and Holiness, in which they suppose *Adam* was created. But this is wide of the Apostle's Sense. It is not uncommon with him to compare the Christian Church to a Man, or the human Body, of which *Christ* is the Head, and we are all of us Members in particular. The *new Man* was created, when God erected the Gospel Dispensation, and broke down the middle Wall of Partition between us, Jews and Gentiles, (*Ephes. ii. 13, 14, 15, 16.*) for to make to himself, in the Gospel, of
twain,

twain, or of the two Parties, believing Jews and Gentiles, *one new Man*, or the new Constitution and Community, under the Gospel. To this *new Man*, the *old Man* is directly opposed; and therefore must signify the Gentile State or Community, headed by *Satan*, to which, before their Conversion, they were joined. This is confirmed by the Apostle, *Ephes. ii. 11. Wherefore remember, that ye being in Time passed GENTILES in the Flesh, &c.* And *Chap. iv. 17, &c. This I say — that ye walk not as other GENTILES walk, &c.* They formerly belonged to the *old Man*, the Body of impure, idolatrous Heathen; but now they had, by their Christian Profession, *put off this old Man*, together *with all his wicked Deeds*, *Col. iii. 9, 10*, and *had put on the new Man*, or were joined to the Christian Church, or Community. And therefore, they were obliged to be *renewed in the spirit of their Minds*, and to live in *Knowledge*, [true Wisdom] or in *Righteousness and true Holiness*. For God created the *new Man*, or constituted the Christian Church, in Wisdom and Righteousness and Holiness, after his own Image, or the Rectitude of his Nature, with this Design, to promote the same Rectitude among Men. For (*Ephes. ii. 10.*) *we*, the new Man, or the whole Body of Christians, *are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God ordained,*
when

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when he formed the Gospel Scheme, *that we should walk in them.*

BUT what hath this to do with *Adam's* being created in Righteousness and true Holiness? Which, in the Nature of things, could not be created, or wrought into his Nature at the same time that he was made; because such a Righteousness would have been produced in him without his Knowledge and Consent; and so would have been no Righteousness at all. For whatever is wrought in my Nature without my Knowledge and Choice, cannot possibly be either Sin or Virtue in me, because it is no Act of mine; but must be a meer natural Instinct, like the Industry of the Bee, or the Fierceness of the Lion. Righteousness is right Action, directed by Knowledge and Judgment; but *Adam* could neither act, nor know, nor judge, before he, and all his intellectual Powers were created; and therefore he must exist and use his intellectual Powers, before he could be righteous and holy.

WE may further observe — That God made the first Pair Male and Female, that they might multiply and inhabit the whole Earth, and supply a perpetual Succession of Men and Women, pronouncing a Blessing upon the regular Propagation of the human Species, *Ver. 28. And God blessed them, &c.* But this Blessing, Divines have supposed,
was

was turned into a Curse, by *Adam's* Transgression; which so corrupted the human Nature, that thereby and thenceforth we all come into the World under the Wrath and Curse of God. But that this also is a Mistake, is most evident from *Gen. ix. 1.* where God repetes, and pronounces the very same original Blessing upon the Increase or Birth of Mankind 1600 Years, and upwards, after *Adam's* Transgression, when the World was to be restored, and replenished from *Noah and his Sons.* This proves, that Mankind, in all successive Generations, have come, and will come into the World, under the very same Blessing and Favor of God, which was declared at the first Creation of Man. It is of great Importance to observe these Remarks, not to produce any Disgust or Animosity towards those that espouse the contrary Opinion, who ought to be treated with Candor and Forbearance, but to settle our own Judgments upon right Principles.

ONCE more; the original Grant of Sustenance to Man was confined to Herbs, and the Fruits of Plants and Trees, *Ver. 29, 30.* which afterwards was enlarged, and included animal Food, *Gen. ix. 3.*

Now let us take a Survey of the Nature which God has graciously bestowed upon us. The Body consists of a mean Material, *the Dust of the Ground*; but the Mind is of nobler Extraction, for (*Chap. ii. 7.*) *God breathed*

breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul. Job xxxii. 8. The Inspiration of the Almighty giveth us Understanding ; the noblest Gift of our Maker. The Force and Excellence of which appears in a surprising Variety of Inventions and Discoveries. It is this Faculty which penetrates into the most secret Recesses of Nature ; judges of, and admires the Beauty and Contrivance of the vast Fabric of the Universe ; and traceth the Footsteps of the most astonishing Wisdom and Regularity in the various Situations and Motions of the heavenly Bodies. By this we review Generations and Actions, Characters and Events, that existed long before we were born ; and dart our Reflections the other way, into Futurity, even as far as to the final Period of this World, with all its Works. By this we conceive, though but negatively, Eternity itself ; and apprehend the State and Felicity of Beings far superior to ourselves. By this we stretch our Thoughts to the highest Excellency, and contemplate the Nature of the infinitely perfect Being.

OUR singular Honor and Advantage lies in our moral Capacities. While Instinct determines the Pursuits of inferior Creatures ; whilst they are utterly unable to judge of Causes and Effects, to draw Consequences, or to reason about the Natures and Tendencies of things, in order to avoid

or embrace, and are rather acted upon, than act, we deliberate, we choose our Way, we feel and examine what is before us ; this is good, and therefore to be chosen ; this is evil, therefore to be avoided ; this will improve and exalt our Life, this leads to Dishonour and Misery. We can study and observe the Precepts of Divine Wisdom ; imitate the moral Perfections of Deity ; converse with the supreme Father, and desire, and dispose ourselves for, the everlasting Enjoyment of his Favor. And agreeably to these distinguishing Honors of our Nature, God our Maker, whose Delights are with the Children of Men, has expressed his high Regards to us, by supplying us with all proper Materials for the Improvement of our Understandings ; not only the Objects of Nature, but also the Writings of good and wise Men, especially the holy Scriptures, a rich Treasury of the most excellent Knowledge ; containing the most surprizing Discoveries, the most useful Instructions, the most just and noble Principles and Motives, and whatever is proper to cultivate and refine our Spirits. In particular, the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ. That God should send his well-beloved Son out of his Bosom to dwell among us in our Flesh, to revele the high Designs of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, to give himself a Sacrifice
and

and Offering to God upon the Cross, to make Atonement for our Sins, to raise us to the Dignity of Kings and Priests to his God and Father, that we might reign for ever with him ; this exalts the Love of God to Men infinitely beyond our highest Thoughts and Imaginations ; this raises our Nature to an amazing, to an inexpressible Dignity and Value.

THESE Considerations should dispose us to be pleased with our Being, and thankful to our Maker for it. With Pleasure we should reflect that we are *Men*. Every Person, how low soever in the World, hath that in Possession, which is more valuable than thousands of Gold and Silver ; an immense Treasure, to which the whole Earth bears no Proportion, *himself*, a reasonable Soul, an immortal Spirit ; to which, in real Excellence, the visible Creation, the Earth with all its material Riches, the Sky with all its splendid Furniture, is not to be compared. Let us not measure ourselves by worldly Riches. The Soul is the Standard of the Man, and raises him vastly above all that is earthly. How foolish then, how shameful, how impious is it to prostitute ourselves to the Trifles of the World ; to be fond of earthly Things, and to make our Reason a Drudge to sensual Pursuits ! God has made us *Men*, Creatures of the finest Powers and Faculties ; he hath used us as Men, by
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making the most ample Provision to enable us to honor his Grace and our own Being. And shall we desert our Manhood ? Shall we despise the rich Bounty of Heaven ? Shall we mingle with the Dust that Particle of superior Life, which God hath breathed into us ? Rather let us assert the Dignity of our Being, and make it our principal Care to improve it by all the Advantages God hath provided. The Knowledge of God ; Conformity of Heart and Life to his Will ; the Fruits of the Spirit, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Fidelity, Meekness, Temperance ; Converse with God ; the high Privileges of the Sons of God ; the Prospects of eternal Glory ; these are the Objects of our Care : as we are enlightened by the Gospel, we are obliged to make these our Study, and to form our Spirits according to the sublime and excellent Sentiments which these inspire, that thus we may be fitting ourselves for a much higher and more perfect Degree of Existence in a better World.



C H A P. VI.

*Of the INSTITUTION of the SABBATH.**Gen. II. Ver. 1, 2, 3.*

AS soon as God had created the World, and Man in it, he *blest the Seventh Day*, upon which he rested from Creation, and *sanctified it*, i. e. he distinguished it from the other six Days by setting it apart to the Purposes of Religion. Thus the Sanctification of the Sabbath is the first and oldest of God's Institutions, and must have a real Foundation in the nature of Man, and an immediate Connexion with our Being, and the great and excellent Ends of it. The Sabbath and Man were, in a manner, created together. This is an Indication, that although the particular time is, as it must necessarily be, of positive Appointment, yet the thing itself is an article of natural Religion, and stands upon the reason of things. The great end for which we are brought into Life, is to attain the Knowledge, and to be confirmed in the Love and Obedience of God; which includes all right Action and Virtue, all that is perfective of our Nature, all that renders us happy in our Selves, and a Blessing to others; and all that can qualify
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us for the enjoyment of God, and fit us for immortal Honour and Glory. We cannot keep a due and prevailing sense of these things upon our Minds, without close and repeated application of Thought; and therefore, as the Affairs and Necessities of this present Life make such constant and importunate Demands upon us, that our Hearts and Thoughts would be unavoidably ingrossed by them, it is in the nature of things necessary, that some certain time should be publicly appropriated to the exercises of Religion, Instruction, Prayer and Praise, to fortify our Minds against Temptations, and to season them with Piety and Virtue. And doubtless, God alone hath Wisdom and Authority sufficient to assign that portion of time which is proper and generally competent for those good Purposes.

THE Sabbath is perfectly suited to our Nature and Circumstances, and therefore was very properly instituted at the Creation. But some of the Learned pretend, that *Moses* here speaks, by Anticipation, of the Institution of the Sabbath a long time after this, when he was Lawgiver in *Israel*. This is a fiction without any foundation in the Text. The Historian expressly relates, that God blessed and sanctified that Day on which he rested, or ceased, from Creation; which, in all fair Construction, must be understood of his sanctifying it, at the time when he

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rested from Creation. That we find no other mention of the Sabbath in the summary and very comprehensive History of *Genesis*, is no proof that the Patriarchs did not observe it ; much less that the Law thereof was not all that time in force. We find not the least mention, or intimation, of the Sabbath in all the Book of *Joshua*, nor in *Judges*, *Ruth*, *I Samuel*, *II Samuel*, *I Kings*, till we come to *II Kings*, iv. 23. a far more particular history than the Book of *Genesis* ; and yet it is very certain that the Law of the Sabbath was all that time in force, and without doubt was observed too. There are very clear intimations of regard to the Sabbath in the Book of *Genesis*, Chap. viii. 8—13, Thrice *Noah* sent the Dove out of the Ark, after he had every time waited seven Days. *Jacob* (Gen. xxix. 27, 28.) fulfilled *Leah's* Week. This plainly shews the Patriarchs, long before *Moses* was born, reckoned Time by *seven Days*, or *Weeks* ; which can be referred to no other supposeable Original but the institution of the Sabbath, at the Creation.

THE *Israelites* indeed, during their long Continuance and Servitude in *Egypt*, upwards of 200 Years, seem to have lost their reckoning of the Sabbath, when they were constrained by perpetual and most servile Labor to neglect the Observance of it. However, it certainly was the Appointment of God, that they should begin a new Reckoning

ing of the seventh Day, and from a new Epocha; namely, the falling of the *Manna*. *Exod. xvi. 5. And it shall come to pass on the sixth Day, they shall prepare that Manna which they bring in ; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.* And when the People had done so, the Rulers of the Congregation came, and told Moses ; probably inquiring into the Reason, why God had given such an Order, *Ver. 23. And Moses said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said, or, this is the Meaning of the Divine Command, To-morrow is the Rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord. Ver. 25, 26. Ye shall not then find it in the Field ; six Days shall ye gather it, but on the seventh Day, which is the Sabbath, there shall be none.* And this Course continued for forty Years till they came into the Land of *Canaan*. Now this was devised in much Wisdom to settle and determine the Day, which, otherwise, having lost their Reckoning, during their long Servitude in *Egypt*, they possibly would not easily have been brought to agree upon. For thus, for forty Years together, they would be under a Necessity of distinguishing the Sabbath, and of resting upon it ; having little else to do the greatest Part of the time, but to gather and dress *Manna* ; and no *Manna* falling upon that Day, they must of course be assured of the Day, and obliged to rest upon it. Note — the restoring

and ascertaining the Sabbath, was the first Point of Religion, that was settled, after the Children of *Israel* came out of *Egypt*, as being of the greatest Moment ; and this, in Relation to the original Institution, for the Law at Mount *Sinai* was not then given.

AFTERWARDS the Ordinance of the Sabbath was inserted into the Body of the moral Law, under a particular Emphasis, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy.* And the Jew is reminded of the Antiquity of this Institution, in the Reason annexed to this Commandment, *For in six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, &c.* And being thus ranked among the other great Articles of our Duty, which are of moral Obligation, and are always referred and appealed to, by our Lord and his Apostles, as binding to us Christians, it must stand upon the same Ground, and lay the same Obligations upon our Consciences. For the same Truth and Authority, which enacted the rest, enacted this Precept also. He that said, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me — thou shalt not bow down to any graven Image — thou shalt not take the Name of God in vain — honor thy Father — thou shalt do no Murder — &c.* said also, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy.*

THE Jewish Festivals, New-Moons and Sabbaths, as they were Shadows and Figures of good things to come under the Gospel,
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our Lord did abolish. When the Substance was come, the Shaddow vanished. And it is of Sabbaths in this Sense the Apostle speaks, *Col. ii. 16. Let no Man judge you in Meat, or in Drink, or in respect of a Holy-Day, or of the new Moon, or of the Sabbath Days.* But the seventh Day Sabbath was no Part of the Levitical Law, it existed long before that, and therefore was not abolished with it. On the contrary, our Lord claims Dominion over the Sabbath. *Luke vi. 5. He said unto the Pharisees, that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.* Therefore the Sabbath must be an Ordinance belonging to our Lord's Kingdom, otherwise he could not be Lord of it. He never pretended to be Lord of Circumcision, or of Sacrifices ; these belonged to a Dispensation of which he was not Lord. But he is Lord of the Christian Dispensation, and its Ordinances, and among the rest of the Sabbath. In Consequence of which Lordship,

I. HE rectified the superstitious Abuse of the Sabbath, and reduced it to the original Standard. He reformed the traditionary Corruptions of several of the Commandments of moral and eternal Obligation *. But of all others, most signally, remarkably, and constantly, by Words and by Deeds, at the Hazard of his Life, he reformed the

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Abuse

* Mat. v. 21, 27, 33. xv. 4, &c.

Abuse of the fourth Commandment †; which he never would have done, had the Sabbath been an Ordinance, that was to die in a little time with the Jewish Dispensation. On the contrary, this demonstrates, that he regarded the just Sanctification of the Sabbath as of perpetual Obligation, and as of very great Importance in Religion.

II. HE removed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first Day of the Week. For we find in the Apostolic History that the Disciples met together on that Day, (called the Lord's Day, *Rev. i. 10.*) to break Bread, or to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which is the proper and peculiar Worship of Christians, *Acts xx. 7.* Now this could not be done without the express Injunction of the Apostles; nor could the Apostles do this without a Commission from Christ. And as our Lord rose from the Dead on the first Day, we suppose the Christian Sabbath hath relation to his Resurrection; and so the Lord's Day hath been kept holy by the universal Church from the Apostles Days to this time.

THUS there have been three *Epochas*, or Dates, from which the Sabbath has been counted, namely, (1.) From the first Day
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† See Mat. xii. 1—12. Luke vi. 10, 11. xiii. 11—17. xiv. 1—7. John v. 9—19. vii. 19—23. ix. 14, 15, 16.

of the Creation. (2.) From the first Day of the falling of the *Manna*. (3.) From the first Day of the Gospel Dispensation. But still it is the seventh Day makes the Sabbath, which God blessed ; and the seventh, which we now observe, is as much, and as truly the Sabbath, which God sanctified, as ever it was from the begining of the World.

THE primary Notion of the Sabbath, is a Rest or Cessation from the ordinary Business of Life. The Design of it is to preserve true Religion ; which would never have been lost in the World, had the Sabbath been duly observed from the first Institution of it. And therefore we find in Scripture, both under the old and new Dispensations, it was applyed to the Purposes of Religion. It is represented as a holy Convocation, on which the *Israelites* were to assemble for divine Worship, *Lev. xxiii.*

3. *David* wrote the 92^d Psalm for the Sabbath Day, and therein gives us just Ideas of the Work of it. On this Day the *Jews* met together in their Synagogues for religious Exercises ; and there our Lord honored and sanctified the Sabbath by his Presence and Instructions. *Mark i. 21, 22. vi. 2. Luke iv. 16, 31. xiii. 10.* And all Christians, in all times and places, have assembled on the Sabbath to hear the Word of God, to offer up Prayer and Thanksgiving, and to cele-

brate the Lord's Supper, in order to employ their Thoughts in pious Meditations, and furnish their Minds with the best Principles and Dispositions. A Work exceeding pleasant and profitable, which demands and deserves the whole of our Thought and Attention. Therefore, for this good Purpose, we are to rest from ordinary Business, and to avoid whatever may dissipate our Thoughts, or indispose our Hearts for the heavenly Work of the Day.

OUR Lord hath taught us so to understand this, as not to mix any thing superstitious with the Observation of the Sabbath, nor to conceive of it as such a scrupulous Rest, that we may not do any thing fit and reasonable, and which otherwise is a Duty ; works of Necessity and Mercy he expressly allows. Whatever cannot be deferred to another Day, without Loss or Damage, may be taken Care of on the Sabbath. And in general he hath pronounced, *That the Sabbath* (alluding probably to the first Institution of it) *was made for Man*, to be subservient to his Virtue and Happiness ; *not Man for the Sabbath*. Man was made for Duties of moral and eternal Obligation, and is bound to observe them in whatever Extremity or Necessity he may be ; but Man is not made for the rigorous Observation of the sabbatical Rest, or any other positive Institution, so as thereby to embarrass or distress his

his Life, or to neglect any Opportunity of doing good.

I CONCLUDE with a few Reflections upon *Isai. lviii. 13, 14.* Having, in the Name of God, recommended Goodness, Charity, and Compassion, in the preceding Verses, and pronounced a singular Blessing upon those who exercise them, the Prophet adds, by the same Authority, *If thou turn away thy Foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy Pleasure on my holy Day. Q. D.* “ If you conscientiously suspend the ordinary Business of Life, and forbear to please and gratify your own Inclinations, that with a free and composed Mind you may attend upon the Services of Religion, for which I have sanctified the Sabbath ; *and [if thou] call the Sabbath a Delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, and shalt honor him ;* if you have such a Sense of the Excellency and Benefit of the Sabbath, that you take Delight therein, accounting it a Pleasure and Happiness, as being consecrated to the Worship of the most high God, and therefore honorable and glorious in itself ; and honorable also to you, as it is a Mark of the Dignity of your Nature, a Token of your Interest in the divine Favor, (*Exod. xxxi. 13. Ezek. xx. 12.*) and of your being admitted to Communion with him ; if in this Persuasion you shall sincerely endeavor to honor God by employ-
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“ ing the Day in the Offices of Devotion,
“ *not doing thine own Ways, nor finding thine*
“ *own Pleasure, nor speaking thine own Words;*
“ not doing the ordinary Works of your
“ Calling, nor spending the time in Amuse-
“ ments or Diversions, or in impertinent
“ Conversation ; *then shalt thou delight thy-*
“ *self in the Lord* ; then thou shalt become
“ such a Proficient in Piety, and gain such
“ a Sense of God and Religion, as will
“ establish in your Heart a Fund of holy
“ Pleasure, Comfort, Joy, and good Hope
“ towards God.” The Prophet, in this
Chapter, is inculcating real, vital, acceptable
Religion, Goodness and Compassion to our
Fellow-Creatures, and Piety towards God
in keeping the Sabbath ; promising the like
Blessings to both those Branches of true Re-
ligion, namely, the Favor of God and the
constant Care of his Providence. We may
therefore take this from the Spirit of God,
as a just Description of the right Manner of
sanctifying the Sabbath, and assure ourselves,
that he who blessed the Day, will bless us in
keeping it holy.







C H A P. VII.

Of a STATE of TRIAL.

Gen. ii. 8—18.

CONCERNING the Situation and Rivers of the Country of *Eden*, as here described by *Moses*, Bp. PATRICK, in his Commentary upon this Place, gives an Account, which seems to be not altogether improbable. The Garden lay in the Country of *Eden*; out of, or through, which Country a River went unto the Garden to water it, (*Ver. 11.*) and from thence, from the Country of *Eden*, it parted, or was divided, and became into four Heads; namely, two above, before it entered *Eden*, called *Euphrates* and *Hiddekel*, or *Tigris*; and two below, after it had passed through *Eden*, called *Pison* and *Gihon*, which compasseth, or runeth along by, the whole Land of *Cush*, *Ver. 13.*

In the eastern Part of *Eden* the Lord God planted a Garden, furnished with all pleasant and useful Fruits. And there he placed *Adam* to dress and keep it; for Man was made for Business, *Ver. 8, 15.* Two Trees in this Garden were remarkably distinguished from the rest, perhaps in Appearance

pearance and Situation, as well as in Use, namely, the *Tree of Life*, and the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. These, I conceive, were appointed for Instruction and religious Meditation ; to preserve in *Adam's* Mind a Sense of the Consequences of Virtue and Vice, or of Obedience and Disobedience. In this View, while he continued obedient, he was allowed to eat of the Tree of Life, as a Pledge and Assurance on the Part of God, that he should live for ever, or be immortal ; after his Transgression he was denied access to it, *Chap. iii. 24*. For the same Purpose, as a Pledge of Immortality restored in Christ, it is used, *Rev. ii. 7. xxii. 2*. On the contrary, the other Tree was designed to give him the Knowledge, the Sense or Apprehension of Good and Evil, or of Good connected with Evil, *i. e.* of pernicious Enjoyment, destructive Gratification, vicious Pleasure, or such as cannot be enjoyed without transgressing the Law of God. *Good and Evil*, I apprehend, is an *Hendiadys*, like that *Gen. xix. 24. Brimstone and Fire*, *i. e.* fired or burning Brimstone. *1 Chron. xxii. 5. the House must be — of Fame and Glory*, *i. e.* of glorious Fame. *Pateris libamus et auro*, *i. e.* aureis pateris. כּוֹב may signify Pleasure or Profit. [See the Explication of it in the Heb. Engl. Concordance.] Thus *Good and Evil* may denote
pernicious

pernicious Pleasure or Profit. Of the Fruit of this Tree, though it appeared pleasant and inviting, *Adam* was forbidden to eat upon pain of Death. This was to make him understand, that unlawful Enjoyment of any kind would be his Destruction.

THESE two Trees may be considered as *Adam's* Books. He was in a kind of infantile State, void of all Learning, without any Theorems, or general Principles to govern himself by. God was therefore pleased, in this sensible Manner, to impress upon his Mind just Conceptions of the very different Consequences of Obedience and Disobedience. And it will be of great Use even to us, at this Day, to look into, and to meditate upon these two Books of our first Father.

WHAT requires our particular Attention is this, that *Adam's* Obedience is put upon Trial by the Prohibition, *Ver. 17. But of the Tree of Knowledge, of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the Day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* *Adam* had not gained the Habits of Obedience and Holiness, but was put under this instance of Discipline in order to his acquiring of them. As soon as God had made Man a moral Agent, he put him upon Trial. And it is universally allowed, that all Mankind are in the same State, in a State
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of Trial. It must therefore be of Importance to have right Notions of such a State.

IN order to this, let it be well considered,

I. *THAT* God hath erected a Kingdom for his Honor, and the Felicity of his rational Creatures. This Kingdom, our Lord informs us, was prepared from the Foundation of the World. Mat. xxv. 34. There we Men shall be, equal to the Angels, Luke xx. 36 ; and probably, like them, shall be placed in Posts of Honor and Power, in some Part of the Universe ; as is plainly intimated Mat. xxiv. 45—47. xxv. 21. Luke xix. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. Rev. ii. 10. iii. 21.

II. *WITHOUT* Holiness, or an habitual Subjection of the Will to Reason, or to the Will of God, none can be fit to be Members of this Kingdom. Wickedness, in its very Nature, stands directly opposed to the Peace and Well-being of the Universe ; for it is Error in the Mind, Rebellion against God, and Mischief to all within its Influence. And the most benevolent of all Beings will not take Error, Rebellion, and Mischief into his Kingdom, erected for the Purposes of Goodness and Enjoyment. Rev. xxi. 27. *And there shall in no wise enter into it, the holy City, new Jerusalem, (Ver. 2.) any thing that defileth, any impure, vicious Persons ; neither whatsoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lie ; all Idolaters, all that prac-*
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tise Iniquity and Deceit, are excluded out of it. *But they shall bring the Glory and Honor of the Nations into it* ; the excellent of the Earth, who have purged themselves from all Ungodliness and Sin, and so *are Vessels unto Honor, sanctified and fit for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good Work.* Nothing but Subjection to the Will of God, in all Duty and Obedience, can qualify us for the Honors, Felicity, and Employments of the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore,

III. *NO moral Agents, merely on account of their natural Powers, how excellent soever, are worthy to be admitted into the Kingdom of God.* Natural Powers, in Angels as well as Worms, are the Workmanship and Gift of God alone ; and therefore, not being the Virtue, nor the Effect of the Virtue of the Beings that are possessed of them, can be no Recommendation to the continued Favor and Esteem of God. In order to that, the natural Powers of moral Agents must, not only be capable of right Action, but also actually exerted in acting rightly. Otherwise, their Powers, though of the noblest kind, are useless and insignificant. It is one thing to be born, or produced into the *Kingdom of Nature*, and another to be born to the Habits of Virtue, whereby we are rendered fit to be admitted into the *Kingdom of Heaven.* The former depends entirely upon God's

God's sovereign Pleasure, in giving Life and Powers, in any Kind or Degree, as he chooseth ; the other depends upon a right Use and Application of the Powers God hath bestowed ; and is the Privilege only of those wise and happy Spirits, who attain to a Habit of true Holiness. And thus, our Lord's Rule, *Job. iii. 3. Except a Man be born again, he cannot see, or enjoy, the Kingdom of God,* may extend to all created Minds whatsoever, under their several peculiar Circumstances.

IV. *HOLINESS, or Virtue, cannot be forced upon us whether we will or not.* The Violence, which overpowers and compels the Will, destroys the Will or Choice, and consequently destroys Virtue ; which is no otherwise Virtue, than as it is freely chosen. That Being which cannot be vicious, cannot be virtuous. If he is not free to choose Evil, he is not free to choose Good ; for a Power of being virtuous necessarily implies a Power of being the contrary. The only Means, therefore, that can be used to induce a moral Agent to Virtue, are Instruction, Admonition, Persuasion, the Impression of Objects or Circumstances upon the Mind, the Suggestions of the Spirit of God, and such like Methods as engage Attention, and influence Inclination and Choice, without destroying Freedom. And a *Habit* of Virtue, which alone recommends us to
God,

God, can be gained and ascertained no other-wise than by repeated Acts, by Use and Exercise, by being put to the Proof under proper Trials, by resisting Solicitations, surmounting Difficulties, and bearing Sufferings. This is the most natural way of bringing Virtue, or Holiness, to its Maturity and Stability. Therefore,

V. *IT seems agreeable to the Reason of things, that all rational Creatures whatsoever should, for some time, be in a State of Trial.* However, this is, or hath been, the Case of all we are acquainted with. The Angels have passed through a Probation, doubtless adapted to their different Circumstances ; in which some of them *abode not in the Truth ; they sined ; they kept not their first Estate,* Job. viii. 44. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6. And our first Parents, how singular soever their Condition might be in other respects, were put under a particular Trial, by being forbidden to eat of *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil ;* which must be intended to form their Minds to an habitual Obedience to the Law, or Will, of God.

VI. *WE Men are upon Trial.* This is evident from Revelation, where we are represented as *Pilgrims and Strangers*, looking for, and traveling to a better Country, 1 Pet. ii. 11. — As in a *Warfare*, where we must fight for the Victory, as we hope to be crowned, Ephes. vi. 14. — As in a *Race*,
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where we are running for a Prize, *Heb. xii. 1. 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25.* — As *Laborers* in a Vineyard, who have Work to do in order to receive Wages, *Mat. xx. 1.* — As *Servants* intrusted with their Master's Substance, for the Improvement of which they are accountable to him, *Mat. xxv. 14. Luke xix. 13.* And God hath appointed a Day, in which he will call us to an account for our present Behaviour, and render to every Man according to what he hath done in the Body, whether it be good or evil. This is the strongest Evidence, that we are now upon Trial. And the Sense of Revelation is abundantly confirmed by our Circumstances in Life.

Our Faculties are of the noblest kind, and we enjoy all manner of Means for the Cultivation of them ; but not without great Care, Industry, and Resolution. So many are the Occasions of Deception, and so easily are we misled in our Searches after the Truth, that we cannot attain to any clear or useful Knowledge without a constant and cautious Attention. Even Revelation, like the Heavens themselves, is interspersed with Clouds, things dark and hard to be understood. And when we have found the Truth, the Profession of it is attended with much Inconvenience and Trouble from the Pride and Malice of Persecution. All which is wisely appointed. For had all been plain, obvious,

obvious, and easy, our Integrity and sincere Attachment to Truth could not have been exercised and proved. The Passions and Appetites of the Flesh ; the Possessions, Gains, Pleasures, and Customs of the World ; the Calamities of Life, Diseases, Disappointments, Losses, Dangers, Enemies, Fears, Wants, Weakness ; all these are great Embarrassments to Virtue and Piety, fatigue and solicit our Minds from Righteousness and Purity, and oblige us to constant Watchfulness and Self-denial, in order to gain and secure the Habits of Holiness. Every Condition, every Possession is accompanied with its Temptations. Wherever we are, we are in the midst of Snares ; and whatever we have carries some Danger or other in it ; insomuch that, without Care and Attention, we cannot preserve the Purity of our Minds, which yet, by the Nature of things, and the Command of God, we are obliged to do. This shews we are upon Trial, or in a State of Discipline. For,

VII. *A State of Trial necessarily requires, that different and opposite Interests, (as the Flesh and the Spirit, the Law of God, and the Law in our Members, the present World, and a future State,) should so stand in Competition for our Affections and Regards, as to oblige us to be very serious in considering, and thoroughly sincere in choosing and pursuing what is right and good.* And herein lies our

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Trial, whether we will follow God, or forsake him, prefer our mortal Bodies before our immortal Souls, the Gratification of our Lusts, before the Purity and Peace of our Minds, the things of this transitory World, before the heavenly and eternal Inheritance.

VIII. *THE End and Design of our Trial is to refine and exalt our Nature.* James i. 12. *Blessed is the Man that worthily endureth Temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* Heb. xii. 11. *No Chastening for the present is joyous but grievous ; nevertheless, &c.* If indeed we are overcome by Temptation, and drawn into a Contempt of God, Truth, and Righteousness, we debase and destroy ourselves ; we prove ourselves to be unfit for the happy Society in Heaven, forfeit the Favor of God, and shall fall into Perdition. But this must be our own Fault. The noble Intention of our Maker is, that we should overcome Temptation, and then we are happy for ever. We have stood the Test, we have passed honorably through our Trials, we have approved ourselves to God, as those whom he judges fit for Preferment and Happiness in his eternal Kingdom. And shortly we shall hear, *Well done, good and faithful, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* Hence our Trial is compared to that of Silver and Gold,

Gold, *Job* xxiii. 10. *Psal.* lxvi. 10, 11. *1 Pet.* i. 6, 7.

To explain Scripture Language, we must distinguish between Temptation of *Trial*, and *Seduction*. Temptation of *Trial*, or Probation, God hath wisely ordained for the Exercise and Proof of our Virtue. So he tempted *Abraham*, *Gen.* xxii. 1. Temptation of *Seduction* is when we are drawn into Sin, *James* i. 13. *Let no Man say, when he is tempted, seduced into Sin by Temptation.*

FROM the preceding Propositions we may draw the following Conclusions.

COROL. 1. *TRIALS, of the severest kind, are no Mark of God's Displeasure, nor any Proof, that we are under his Wrath and Curse. Adam in his State of Innocence was tried. The best of God's Servants have gone through heavy Trials. Our Lord was tempted in all Points as we are, but without Sin, Heb. iv. 15. My Son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his Correction. For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a Father the Son in whom he delighteth, Prov. iii. 11, 12.*

COROL 2. *THE Appetites and Passions implanted in our Constitution, are not the Corruption of our Nature, but Means of our Trial. And therefore we shall be freed from them, when that is over. 1 Cor. vi. 13. Meats for the Belly, and the Belly for*

Meats — but God shall destroy both it and them — xv. 44. It is sown an animal Body, it is raised a spiritual Body.

COROL. 3. *WHATEVER Trials may be the occasion of Sin, may much more be the occasion of Virtue and Holiness. Temptation may occasion Sin, but is not the Cause or Reason of it. For, seeing no Temptation can ever make it reasonable to sin, every Temptation, if the Siner chooseth, may be rejected as unreasonable. On the other hand, Temptation is naturally an Opportunity of exerting our Virtue, and of gaining an honorable and glorious Victory. Distresses and Wants may fill our Hearts with solicitude, and tempt us to murmur against God, but they have a Tendency, being duly considered, to lead us to Faith in him, and a humble patient Submission to his Will, the most perfect Part of a worthy Character. Wealth, Honor, and Power, may prove Incentives to Pride, Luxury, and Oppression ; but they may, and ought to be Motives to Gratitude, and Means of greater Usefulness. Our Appetites and Passions may seduce to Intemperance and Debauchery ; but they may be the occasion of practising the most laudable Self-Government and Sobriety. And so of all the rest. Rom. v. 3. We glory in Tribulations ; knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope, that Hope*
which

which *maketh not ashamed*, or that shall never be disappointed. *James i. 2. My Brethren, count it all Joy when ye fall into divers Temptations ; knowing, that the Trial of your Faith worketh Patience. But let Patience have its perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing to qualify you for the Kingdom of Heaven.*

COROL. 4. *IN a State of Trial natural Evil hath a Tendency to promote moral Good.* For under any Defects of Happiness, Virtue may be exercised and increase. Hence it follows, (1.) That this Life, notwithstanding the Afflictions which attend it, is a *Day of Salvation*, or a proper, and valuable Opportunity of attaining eternal Life. (2.) That the Quantity of Virtue in this present World is not to be measured, by the Joy it giveth the Possessor, or the Good it doth to others, but by the Circumstances of Trial under which it acteth and subsisteth. For although all Holiness, by the Will of God, will sooner or later be crowned with Joy ; and always actually brings forth good Works, in Proportion to the Agent's Power and Opportunities ; yet two Agents, of equal Virtue, may be so differently situated in the Creation, that the Virtue of the one shall produce a thousand times less Comfort to its self, and Benefit to others, than the Virtue of the other. Or, the same Virtue which, in this Life, brings forth but

one Degree of Joy and Usefulness, in another World, may bring forth a thousand Degrees.

THIS stands upon two Principles. 1. That Holiness and Happiness are essentially different, and connected only by the Will of God. Hence it is, in fact, that many Persons, truly virtuous and pious, have yet no Comfort of their Virtue. 2. The proper Act of a moral Agent stands in the Will and Choice alone, not in the external Effect produced by it. And therefore the Will, or Choice, may be compleatly holy, where yet the outward Act is hindered by contrary Circumstances. Upon these Grounds one may venture to affirm, that the Virtue of *Lazarus*, which under all his Pains and Poverty in our Earth, brought forth but a small Degree of Joy and Usefulness; might, in *Abraham's* Bosom, be equal to the Virtue of an Angel in Heaven, which actually brought forth ten thousand Degrees. For as a cubical Foot of our grosser Air might possibly expand, and fill a cubical Furlong in the higher and thiner Region of pure *Ether*; so that Virtue, which can subsist under the Loads and Clogs of our Temptations and Difficulties, though its present Fruits are but small, may dilate and blaze out into a Glory, Magnificence, and Splendor, equal to that of the holiest Angels. This the Apostle *Peter* intimates, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. The tried Faith of persecuted Saints will be found

found unto Praise, and Honor, and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

COROL. 5. *THIS World is not a State of Enjoyment.* He that made it, and Man in it, made it for Trial. We must not therefore dream of a continued course of Ease, Peace, and Prosperity, but must expect to meet with Trials.

COROL. 6. *IT is no Matter in what temporal Circumstances we are, if we do but acquit ourselves well and faithfully in the Sight of God.* Job, under all his Calamities, was not a worse Man, or less the Care and Delight of Heaven. He was then, like Gold in the Furnace, under the Discipline of divine Wisdom and Love, in order to his being purified into a Condition more illustrious and excellent. You are in Plenty and Prosperity. What then? This is but an instance of your Trial, and your real Happiness must be measured by the Effects they have upon your Mind. If Prosperity disposes to Thankfulness and good Works, it is happy; but if it seduceth you to forget God, and to indulge irregular Appetites, it is hurtful and pernicious. On the other hand, you are in Affliction, Want, Trouble, Pain. What then? This is not your fixed Condition; it is only one instance of a temporary Trial, which shortly will be at an End. And if your Afflictions work in you greater Contempt of the World, Self-denial, Faith, Submission

mission, Heavenly-mindedness, &c. your Condition is happy, and your Afflictions are really better for you than any other State you may fondly wish for. But observe, this is to be understood of Afflictions brought upon us by Providence ; and will not justify us in bringing them upon ourselves by any faulty criminal Conduct. It is nevertheless our Duty, by all lawful Means, to procure the Conveniencies and Comforts of Life.

C H A P. VIII.

Further Reflections on a STATE of TRIAL.

IT is of the last Importance to have right Notions of Life, as a State of Trial. For thus the whole Scene, otherwise confused and unaccountable, will appear in a just and rational Light. Thus we shall be convinced, that our Being is given us upon the most reasonable and advantageous Terms, for the highest and most excellent Ends ; and shall clearly understand what we have to do for the Improvement and Exaltation of it, free from the vain Imaginations and Pursuits, Hopes and Fears, Joys and Anxieties, which distract the Minds of the unthinking and ignorant. What I
have

have further to advance upon this Point, is comprized in the following Propositions.

I. *IT is a Matter of great Difficulty to adjust our Trials and Succors, so as not to overpower our Faculties by either, but leave us in the free Use of them.*

II. *GOD alone hath Wisdom sufficient to appoint and adjust our Trials.* Because he alone understands perfectly how to adapt them to the Nature of our Minds, and to the Designs of his Goodness. Whereas we know but little of the Nature of our Spirits, and therefore are not able to proportion Temptations to our Powers, nor Helps and Assistances to our Temptations. We are not acquainted with the Work we have to do in the future World, nor the several sorts of Beings, with whom we may hereafter be concerned, in the way of Fellowship or Enmity ; and therefore are by no means capable of judging, what sort or Degree of Trials are proper to give us suitable Qualifications. For this Reason, it is plainly our Duty and Wisdom, humbly and patiently to submit to the Trials God is pleased to allot, and to behave well and faithfully under them ; without censuring, or quarrelling with his Disposals, which is foolish and impious. But though our Understandings in this Case are very defective, yet I conceive there are some general Principles of which we may be, in a good Measure, certain. As,

III. *THE*

III. *THE Bias of Evil in our Trials ought to be strong in Proportion to the Degree of Virtue required of us.* For the Degree of Virtue is to be measured by the Degree of Temptation which it resists. That Virtue is but in a low Degree, which can overcome but a small Temptation. That Virtue is in a higher, which can overcome a stronger Temptation. And that Virtue is in the highest Degree, which is superior to all Temptation.

IV. *THE Degree of Virtue, God expects from us, is to be proportioned to the eminent Stations to which we are to be exalted in his Kingdom.* Or, we shall be exalted in proportion to the Virtue we have attained. *Mat. xix. 28. Luke xix. 16, 17, 18, 19.*

V. *OUR Trial seems to be appointed for a State of Confirmation* — and therefore the Virtue we are to attain must be such as will secure our Perseverance in it ; which Confirmation and Perseverance must stand, not upon our being forcibly constrained to be virtuous, which is a Contradiction, but upon the Habits we have attained, or the settled good Dispositions of our Minds. And it seems to be the great end of our Trial in this World, that we may attain to such a Degree of Sanctity, experienced in a variety of Trials, as in God's Wisdom appears to be of that genuine sort, which shall eventually persevere, and abide to all Eternity.

Of which Matter our Lord speaketh in this wise, *Luke xvi. 10, 11, 12.* *He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If ye therefore have been unfaithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your Trust the true Riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another Man's, i. e. that which may at any uncertain time be taken from you, and therefore, for the sake of which it is not worth your while to do a wrong or wicked thing, who shall give you that which is your own *? what you are to possess for ever, or which you are never to be deprived of. This plainly shews, that we are qualified for Honors and Trusts in Heaven, no otherwise than by our present Faithfulness, or the real good Qualities of our Minds; and that we are now tried in a little, that we may be faithful in much.*

VI. *THE Judge of all the Earth hath certainly ballanced our Trials with the greatest Exactness and Equity, that Temptation may not be too violent for our Weakness, and yet strong*

* ————— Nimium vobis Romana propago
Visa potens, superi, propria [*perpetua*] hæc si dona fuissent.
Æneid. vi. lin. 870.

Nihilne esse proprium [*perpetuum*] cuiquam?

Ter. Andr. Act. iv. Scen. 3. lin. 1.

Omne quod habemus, aut mutuum est, aut proprium.
Donat. in locum.

strong enough to put our Virtue to its proper Proof. Fleshly Lusts war against the Soul, but are conquered effectually by Temperance, or keeping our Bodies in Subjection. The World allures our Minds, but the World of Glory is open to full View, to draw our Regards thither. If the Devil and his Angels are permitted to practise his Malice in perverting Mankind, God hath sent forth a holy and powerful Spirit to illuminate, sanctify, strengthen, and comfort ; and hath ordered his Angels, in great Numbers, to be ministering Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation. We may assure ourselves, that we are upon a fair, and even favorable, Trial ; for, if we do not neglect our Advantages, the Means of securing our Virtue, if we chuse to be virtuous, do far surpass the Occasion of Vice and Sin ; and in all our Conflicts more are with us, than are against us ; God is with us.

VII. *OUR Condition is well adapted to the Purposes of moral Improvement.* If we consider Life as a State of Enjoyment, all is in Confusion and Disorder, and we are easily misled into the most foul and fatal Errors ; but if we take Life as a Trial, for the Exercise of our Virtue, in order to our future Advancement, then every Part of it will appear to be properly appointed. We have every Day Opportunities of shewing our sincere Regards to God, by giving him the
Preference

Preference to the many Appetites and Objects which court our Affections, and come in Competition with him. We have Opportunities enough to learn what is sufficient for us to know. And the Obscurities and Difficulties in the way of *Truth*, are not designed to debar us from it, but to exercise our Integrity in our Searches after it, and Profession of it. All the Calamities of Life, Pains of Body, Infirmities, Seducements, Losses, &c. are Occasions of *purifying our Hearts*, by Sobriety, Humility, Repentance, Self-denial, Patience, &c. And for *social Virtues*, we cannot suppose ourselves in any Situation, where we should have more Occasions, or more pressing Motives to exercise every Species of Benevolence towards our Fellow-Creatures. And if our Love to Men must surmount both Self-love, that deceitful Principle in ourselves, and Ingratitude, that ugly Vice in others, hereby we are obliged to exercise, in the most generous, disinterested, and godlike Manner, a Virtue of the first Rank, and the most necessary to Preferment in God's Creation. For he is the fittest for Business and Trust, under the universal Father, who most of all participates of his kind Dispositions and Good-will towards the whole Universe of Beings.

VIII. *DIFFERENT Persons, as they have different Capacities, Advantages, and Opportunities,*

portunities, and are in different Circumstances, Conditions, and Situations, are under different Trials. Mat. xxv. 15. Luke xii. 47, 48.

IX. *G O D allots to every particular Person his Trial. He gives our Capacities and Opportunities, assigns our Circumstances and outward Condition, and measures our Afflictions and Comforts. Therefore whatever our Trials may be, this should calm our uneasy Minds, that they are meted out to us, by the same wise Hand, which created and governs universal Nature.*

X. *EVERY one will be judged, and receive Reward or Punishment according to the Circumstances of his own particular Trial; and all things relating to it, all Advantages and Disadvantages, will be weighed in the exactest Ballance, and determined accordingly. Luke xii. 47, 48. That Servant which knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes. But he, that was in different Circumstances, and knew not, and did commit things worthy of Stripes, shall be beaten with few Stripes. Here observe, that God fully understands the Degrees of the Guilt, or Virtue of particular Persons, but we do not, and therefore should be cautious in judging.*

XI. *T H E R E are Degrees of Trial; or Temptation may be more or less intense. The Sufferings of the Flesh may be raised*

to

to such an Height of Anguish and Terror, or its Passions so inflamed, as to suspend the Use of Thought and Reason.

XII. *G O D can raise or sink our Trials as he pleases.* When he sees fit, he can give a calm and quiet State ; and when he pleaseth can raise Storms about us, and heat the Furnace of Temptation seven times more than it was wont to be heated. *Job*, in his Trial by Prosperity, acquitted himself well ; and under great Pains and Poverty, he sined not, nor charged God foolishly. But at length, through the unkind Usage of his Friends, and perhaps some other concurring Circumstances, his Trial began to be so hard, that he opened his Mouth, and cursed his Day. Whenever the Almighty pleaseth he can permit a Trial that will shake the strongest Faith. Therefore,

XIII. *NO good Resolutions or Dispositions, no Degrees of spiritual Strength to which we have attained, is an absolute Security, that we shall be for the future stedfast and unmoveable.* New, or sudden Trials, stronger than any we have hitherto met with, may shake and stagger the Stability of our Minds. Let no Man imagine, that his former Victories will exempt him from a possibility of Falling. It is the Will of God, that every Man, the best of Men, in this State, should be under a constant necessity of Watching. *Wherefore, let us take unto ourselves the whole*

Armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil Day, and having done, or overcome, all to stand. Eph. vi. 13.

XIV. *ALL Trial is attended with Danger.* And therefore some, if not many, in a State of Trial, may fall into Perdition. As wicked Angels and Men.

XV. *OUR Danger is not from God, but from ourselves.* God tempteth, or seduceth into Sin, no Man, Jam. i. 13, 14, 15, for this very good Reason, because he cannot himself be tempted with Evil, such is his Abhorrence and Detestation of it; and therefore cannot be inclined to draw any of his Creatures into the Practice of it. But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away from Righteousness by his own Lust, and enticed to commit Sin.

XVI. *ALL Temptation is vincible to those that are willing to overcome.* See Prop. VI. All the Admonitions, Exhortations, Encouragements in Scripture, suppose and support the Truth of this Proposition.

XVII. *WE are victorious over Temptation, not by our own Power, but by the Grace and Power of God.* Even when the Spirit is willing, the Flesh is weak. Mark xiv. 38. We are indeed under the highest Obligations to use faithfully the Powers we have already received, and no otherwise may we hope to be superior to Temptation; but it is not our own Wisdom or Strength that can preserve

serve and uphold us ; for we are directed in Revelation to trust in God, and to seek unto him for Succor and Deliverance, which would be impertinent were we sufficient to ourselves. Why should we ask Help, when we do not want it ? God alone *is able to keep us from falling, and to stablish us in every good Work.* Jude 24. 2 Theff. ii, 16, 17. And we are abundantly assured, that he will give Strength in proportion to our Trials, and our faithful Endeavors ; and that our future Honors will be great in proportion to the present greater Trials we have surmounted. If we have overcome much, we shall enjoy much. For, observe, the Succors of divine Grace do not diminish the Quantity of our Virtue, or Reward. Whatever Helps our Infirmary may require, our Virtue is measured by our own sincere Desires and Endeavors, to which the divine Aid is proportioned. So that, in moral Construction, it is all one as if we had overcome in our own Strength.

XVIII. *THE Means of conquering Temptation, on our Part, are Watching and Prayer.* Mark xiv. 38. *Watch and Pray, that ye enter not into Temptation.* (1.) *Watch.* Be not secure ; expect Temptation, and be sensible of the Danger of it, the greatest of all Dangers, the Loss of the Soul. Be not confident of your own Strength. Keep out of the way of Temptation. Avoid every

Snare that may intangle your Minds. Indulge to no dangerous Liberties ; make no uncautious Approaches towards Folly and Sin. That may be effected by slow Degrees, which a Man would never at first have consented to be guilty of. He that fears falling down a Precipice will be sure not to come near it ; and he that would extinguish the Fire, should withdraw the Fuel. Keep thy Heart with all Diligence ; reject every sinful Thought and Suggestion. Keep the Body in Subjection to Reason and Religion by Self-denial and Abstinence. Beware of an undue Attachment to the World. Your Life and Treasure is in Heaven ; and there let your Hearts be. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly by daily Meditation. *Psal. cxix. 11. Thy Word have I hid in mine Heart, that I might not sin against thee.* (2.) Pray. Not that we may be totally exempted from Temptation ; for we came into the World for this very end, that we might be tried and tempted. We cannot reasonably expect that God, in our Favor, should alter the Constitution of the World, or of the human Nature ; but we should pray, that God would order our Trials in such Manner, as will best promote the Purity, and Probity of our Lives. *Prov. xxx. 8, 9. Remove far from me Vanity and Lies ; give me neither Poverty nor Riches ; feed me with Food convenient for me, &c.* The wise
Man

Man doth not prescribe any Condition ; that did not belong to him ; but, in general, is desirous of that Situation in Life, which God saw would be most favorable to his Piety and Integrity. *Lead us not, suffer us not to enter, into Temptation*, i. e. suffer us not to fall under the Power and Prevalence of Temptation. The Example of our Lord is of the greatest Force to direct and animate us in our Conflicts ; he took upon him our Nature, and went through all our Trials, on purpose to shew us how to behave under them ; and to assure us that, imitating his Example, we shall at length be Partakers of his Glory. And thus by his perfect *Obedience*, his Obedience unto Death, a Sacrifice highly pleasing to God, he recovered that Life and Immortality, which *Adam* forfeited by his *Disobedience*.

C H A P. IX.

*Of Law, or the religious DISPENSATION
Adam and Eve were under in the Garden.*

GEN. ii. 17. *But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. This is Law ;*

clear Ideas of which are necessary to the right Understanding of *St. Paul's Writings*.

LAW is a Rule of Action, or Duty, commanding or prohibiting, given by the Sovereign to moral Agents, with the Penalty of Death annexed *Transgress and die*, is the Language of Law. And therefore every Transgressor, the Moment he is such, is dead in Law; and, for any thing in Law, he must continue so as long as it is true, that he has violated the Law, that is, for evermore. For the Law, which condemns him, can give him no Relief; as, in its own Nature, it excludes Repentance and Pardon; neither of which can take place, unless Law is overruled, or the Execution of it suspended by the Authority and Favor of the Sovereign. For Law would not be Law if its Sense or Language were this, *the Transgressor, who doth not repent and obtain Pardon, shall die*. Seeing this would be to allow Transgression by Law, upon the uncertain Conditions of Repentance, and the Sovereign's Mercy. "You may sin with Impunity, if you do but repent, and find Favor." And so the Law would be invalidated by itself, as it would allow a conditional Transgression, which would annul the annexed Penalty, by suspending the Execution of it forever, in Expectation of the Sinner's Repentance, and the Sovereign's Forgiveness. For, as the Sinner may possibly
repent

repent in any future time to all Eternity, so the Law could not at any time be executed. Consequently the Law, by this Means, would be rendered for ever insignificant, as it might be violated for ever with Impunity. Therefore, to be consistent with itself, Law must be conceived in absolute Terms, *sin and die*, subjecting every Sinner immediately to the Penalty of Death, which is the *Curse of the Law*. Gal. iii. 10, 13. By this Rule the Apostle, having proved that all Flesh have sined, concludes, that *no Flesh*, or no Part of Mankind, *can be justified*, or intitled to Life, before the Sovereign, by Deeds or Works of Law. Rom. iii. 20. For *the Law works Wrath*, or subjects the Transgressor to Death, the Curse or Penalty of it, Rom. iv. 15. On which Account it is very properly called, *the Ministration*, Dispensation, or Constitution, of *Death*, 2 Cor. iii. 7. as it is a Constitution which affords nothing but rigid Condemnation for all Transgressors.

HENCE it follows, that Death in *Law* is Death eternal, without Hopes of a Revival or Resurrection. For, as before proved, it is the very Nature of Law, never to remit the Penalty or Forfeiture. The Law, which now condemns the Criminal, condemns him to Death absolutely, and for evermore ; the everlasting Language of Law to every one that breaks it, and for every Breach and

Transgression, being this, *Thou shalt die*. And this is the Force of the Expression *תָּמוּת מוֹת moriendo morieris*, “in dying thou shalt die,” in the Law given to *Adam*. It doth not speak of the Certainty of the Event, as if he should certainly die the Day he transgressed; for the Event shews the contrary; nor that he should become mortal from a Change in his Constitution, which is a random Conjecture, without any Foundation in the Nature of his Constitution, which was created mortal, or in the Force of the Words. For the Phrase *תָּמוּת מוֹת* is an Hebraism, importing that a thing is, or is done, thoroughly, totally, in the most perfect Manner, or the most intense Degree, and is to be interpreted according to the Nature of the Subject. As *Gen. ii. 16. אָכַל תֹּאכַל comedendo comes*, “thou mayest freely eat” without any Restraint. *Chap. xxxvii. 3. טָרַף טָרַף יוֹסֵף discernendo discernitus est Joseph*, “*Joseph* is torn all to pieces,” or most cruelly torn to pieces. *Exod. xxi. 19. וְרָפָא וְרָפָא et medicando medicabitur*, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed. Thus the Force of the Words, “in dying thou shalt die,” is this, thou shalt thoroughly, utterly, totally die, or die for ever, without coming to Life again. Thou hast justly forfeited thy Life and Being, and shalt suffer a total and eternal Extinction of it.

THIS Sense and Language of Law must be understood only as a Declaration, that the Penalty is just and due ; which is all that can be done by Law as a Rule of Justice, declaring, in general, that he who is disobedient to his Maker hath justly forfeited his Being ; and that, in consequence of his Disobedience, his Maker may justly deprive him of it. The Law can only declare the Truth of this Denunciation, as it hath no Power to put it in Execution ; the Execution of this Threatening must necessarily and entirely rest in the Hands and Power of the Lawgiver ; who therefore may mitigate, respite, or suspend it, as he, judging of Circumstances, shall in his Wisdom think proper. This is the Prerogative of the Sovereign or Lawgiver, which is allowed to be fit and reasonable all the World over. For if this were not allowed, in proper Cases, there could be no such thing as Pardon, or the Mitigation of the Sentence of Law, either with God or Man. Which in every Nation, and throughout the whole Universe, would be a State of things the most severe and the most dreadful.

THUS Room is made for the Exercise of Favor or *Grace*, without doing any Violence to Truth. The Penalty indeed is due, but according to the true Natures of things, there may be alleviating Circumstances in the Case of the Transgressor, which, though
Law

Law can make no Provision for them without destroying itself, yet the Lawgiver may, and, in Reason and Truth, ought to consider and allow with respect to the Infliction of the Penalty. *Wisdom* and *Goodness* ought to have place in him, and certainly do take place in God, as well as *Justice*. Justice consists in executing the Penalty of the Law according to the *Letter* of it ; which *Letter* (2 Cor. iii. 6.) *killeth*, or destroys, the Sinner, by subjecting him to eternal Death, or to a total Extinction of Life ; according to which Rule, there could be no Place for Mercy, and the whole World must be ruined. But *Wisdom* and *Goodness* may mitigate the Rigor of this Constitution, not by abrogating the Law, as a Rule of Life ; for so *the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, just, and good*, (Rom. vii. 12.) and can never be abrogated, being, in its general Intention, agreeable to the everlasting and immutable Natures of things. Much less by finding out some Expedient to satisfy *Law* and *Justice* ; which can be satisfied no other Way than by the Death of the Offender. For Justice, as used in this Case, is acting strictly according to Law.

Nothing, therefore, but the Execution of the Law can satisfy *Justice*. The *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of the Sovereign may do what the Law cannot do ; that is to say, may suspend the Execution of the Sentence

as long as he shall think fit ; and so may leave what Space he pleases for the Sinner's Repentance, and provide what Means he shall think proper to induce him to Repentance ; and upon his Repentance, may restore him to the Assurance of eternal Life, by an eternal Suspension of the Execution of the Law. For as to that, he cannot be limited to any Space of Time. If he hath a Right by Prerogative to suspend at all, it must be a discretionary Right to suspend as long as he chooseth. This is Grace, or Gospel ; by which the Sinner may be restored to the Hope of Immortality, and actually invested in it, by the Wisdom and Favor of the Lawgiver. This *new*, or remedying Constitution, the Apostle calls *Spirit*, which quickens the Sinner condemned to Death by the *Letter* of the Law, or makes him to live. 2 Cor. iii. 6. *Who also hath made us* [Apostles] *able Ministers of the New Testament* [or Constitution] *not of the Letter, but of the Spirit ; for the Letter kills, but the Spirit giveth Life.* Which Spirit, he informs us, Ver. 17, is *the Lord*, or the Gospel of our Lord. *Now the Lord is that Spirit*, that Life-giving Spirit, or the latter *Adam*, who is a *quickening*, or Life-giving, *Spirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45.

THAT the Penalty, *in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely, or utterly die*, is to be understood, not of the Event, as if he should certainly die, but of the Demerit of Transgression, that he would deserve to die ;

die; and that, notwithstanding his Threatning, the Sovereign might respite the Execution of it, and not only allow the Transgression the Benefit of Repentance, but also appoint Means to lead him to Repentance, and to eternal Life, may be clearly proved from *Ezek. iii. 18. xxxiii. 8, 11, 14, 15.* Where God repeats the very same Sentence of the Law upon the wicked Person, whom yet, at the same time, he charges the Prophet to warn, in order to bring him to Repentance, promising Pardon and Life in case he did repent. *Ezek. iii. 18. When באמרִי in dicendo me, whereas] I say [in the Law] unto the Wicked מות תמות thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not Warning, nor speakest to warn the Wicked from his wicked Way to save his Life. Chap. xxxiii. 8. When [whereas] I say [in the Law] unto the Wicked, O wicked Man, מות תמות thou shalt surely [utterly] die, if thou dost not speak to warn the Wicked from his Way, &c. Ver. 14. Again; when [whereas] I say [in the Law] unto the Wicked, מות תמות thou shalt surely [totally] die; if he turn from his Sin, and do that which is lawful and right, Ver. 15. — לא ימות חיז וחייה vivo vivo, he shall surely [totally, eternally] live, he shall not die.*

THUS Law in the rigorous Sense is to be understood; and thus it stands in Connection with the Pardon of Transgressors, or their Attainment of eternal Life through the Fa-

vor of the Lawgiver. That our first Parents, while in the Garden of *Eden*, were under Law, or a Rule of Action with the Penalty of Death annexed, is manifest from the very Form of the Prohibition — *But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt utterly die.* And the Apostle Paul evidently supposes, that Adam was under Law, *Rom. v. 13, 14.* *For until the Law [of Moses] Sin was [committed] in the World ; but Sin [though committed] is not imputed [unto Death] μη ουτος νομω when Law is not in being.* This supposes, 1. That Law is the only Constitution which subjecteth the Sinner to Death. 2. That Law was not in Being in the Times preceding the giving of the Law of *Moses*. *Ver. 14.* *Nevertheless Death reigned from Adam to Moses [while Law was not in Being] even over them that had not sined after the Likeness of Adam's Transgression.* That is to say,
 “ Death reigned all the long Space of about
 “ 2500 Years from *Adam* to *Moses*, even
 “ over those who did not sin, as *Adam* did,
 “ against Law, making Death the Penalty
 “ of their Sin ; because during that Period,
 “ Mankind were not under Law, but under
 “ the general Covenant, or Constitution, of
 “ Grace, given to *Adam* immediately after
 “ his Transgression.”

THIS

THIS evidently supposes, that *Adam* was under Law with the Penalty of Death annexed, while he was in the Garden, or before he transgressed ; and that the same severe Constitution was again revived by *Moses*, after it had been suspended from the time of *Adam's* Transgression till the Law was given by *Moses*. Whence the Apostle concludeth, that, as Death reigned all that long Period, while Sin was committed in the World, and yet no positive Law subsisted, making Death the Penalty of Sin ; he concludes, I say, that Men, in general, did not die for their own Transgressions, but in Consequence of *Adam's* one Transgression.

IT must be observed, that the Apostle *Paul* doth not always use *Law* in the rigid Sense, but sometimes for the whole Jewish Code, or the Old Testament. *Rom.* iii. 19. Sometimes for any inward Principle which influenceth and governeth a Man — vii. 23. Sometimes for a Rule in general — iii. 27. And sometimes for a Rule of Action with the Penalty of Death annexed. *Rom.* v. 20. vi. 15. vii. 4. &c.



C H A P. X.

Of the INSTITUTION of MARRIAGE.

Gen. ii. 18, to the End.

ADAM's calling all Beasts and Fowls by Names doth not imply, that he had a perfect Knowledge of the Natures and intrinsic Qualities of all Animals ; an Opinion destitute of all Evidence ; but that God gave him Dominion over them, as a Master over his Bond-Servants, according to the Force of the Phrase, to *call Things or Persons by Name*. Psal. cxlvii. 4. Isai. xl. 26. xliii. 1. God's allowing *Adam* to give the Creatures what Names he pleased, was the Form of conveying or making over to him the Property of them and Dominion over them. It hath also Reference to the Formation of Woman ; that *Adam*, our first Parent, having surveyed all other Animals, and having observed that they were created in Pairs, for the Propagation of their several Kinds, might be sensible of his own solitary, destitute Condition, and of the Importance of his being also provided of a Mate suitable to his Nature, (which, by reason of its superior Excellency, could not be matched with any of the brutal kind) a Companion in Body
and

and Mind, fit to cohabit with him, for mutual Converse, Delight, Comfort, and Assistance, especially for propagating the human Species ; without which the World would have been stocked with only Brutes.

AND it was fitting, or agreeable to the true Nature of things, that the Formation of the first Woman should be attended with some Circumstance expressive of the Nearness of that Relation, which was to be the Fountain of the Existence of all Mankind, and of all the near and dear Relations, so beneficial and comfortable to the Life of Man. And no Circumstances could do that more significantly, than taking the Woman out of a Part of the Man's Body. Thus she became another Self ; and this was intended as a Document to all Posterity, that a Wife should be regarded and treated as such. *Ephes. v. 28. So ought Men to love their Wives, as their own Bodies ; he that loveth his Wife, loveth himself.*

Ver. 23. *AND* [when the Lord God brought to him the Woman, his Wife, and informed him in what Manner she was produced,] *Adam said, [with much Satisfaction and Joy] this is now Bone of my Bones, and Flesh of my Flesh, the dearest to me of all Creatures ; she shall be called, אִשָּׁה Woman, because she is taken out of אָדָם Man. [A Sign of Adam's Property in her.] Ver. 24. And the Lord God said, (Mat. xix. 4, 5.) Therefore*

fore shall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and shall cleave unto his Wife, and they two shall be one Flesh. Thus Marriage was instituted; a sacred and honorable Ordinance, of high Distinction, as it is very nearly connected with the Dignity and Happiness of the human Nature.

AND by making only one Woman for one Man, God plainly declared, that this Relation ought to subsist between two; as the Prophet well argues, *Mal. ii. 14, 15. And did not he, God, make but one Couple, one Man and one Woman, as a Rule to all Mankind, that should descend from them? yet had he the Residue of the Spirit, and could then have created more Men and Women, if promiscuous Conversation had been for the greater Happiness of the World. And wherefore did he make but one Couple? That he might seek a godly Seed, זרע אלהים* an excellent Seed. That Man and Wife, in chaste Wedlock, in sincere and undivided Affection, might propagate a Posterity to the Honor and Service of God. This is an Argument against Polygamy and Devorce, confirmed by our Lord's Wisdom and Authority, *Mat. xix. 3, 4, 5, 6.* Thus Mankind are brought into the World in a Way suitably to the Excellency of their Nature. For, considering how weak and imperfect our Infancy is, and in how great Ignorance and Dissoluteness of Manners we must necessarily
I grow

grow up to Manhood, without good Discipline and Instruction, it is evident, this World must have been the most wild and disorderly Scene imaginable, were the Race of Mankind propagated in a vagrant, licentious Manner, without Parents to own them, and by their tender Care and Affection to give them a good Education. The Production of an intelligent Being, in the most helpless and exposed Circumstances, and which grows up to a due Degree of Understanding, no otherwise than by good Culture, ought to be attended with all the proper Advantages in the Propagator's Power. And therefore the Propagation of the human Species, according to the true Nature of things, ought to be guarded and directed by the best Exercise of Reason, and not left to be done in a loose, brutal Manner. God did not create Man in Jest ; nor should the ordinary Generation of a Man be made a Matter of lewd Jest, or of lawless Passion. This is the Rationale of Marriage, and of Modesty and Sobriety.

A D A M had no Choice, but his Descendents have great need to exercise Prudence in the Choice of a Relation so important and lasting. The Advice and Approbation of Parents is, in this Case, one of the best Rules. And as Marriage lessens the Interest of Parents in their Children, it is generally not dutiful to alienate it to another
without

without their Knowledge and Consent. Nor should Parents unreasonably oppose the lawful Inclinations of their Children.

Ver. 25. *AND they were both naked, the Man and his Wife, and were not ashamed, being free from Sin and Guilt.*

C H A P. XI.

Of the TEMPTER who deceived EVE.

Gen. iii. 1—9.

HERE *Eve* is deceived and tempted to transgress the Law of God by some moral Agent, who could speak and argue, called by *Moses* *הנחש* *the Serpent*; which, he saith, *was more subtil than any other Beast of the Field, which the Lord God had made.* But a Beast of the Field, how subtil or sagacious soever, could not speak and reason. Who then was the moral Agent that deceived *Eve*? *St. Paul*, 2 Cor. xi. 3. speaks of this Deceiver in the same Manner as *Moses* doth; *I fear, lest by any Means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his Subtilty, so your Minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ.* The Apostle did not suppose the *Corinthians* might be corrupted by the Subtilty of an irrational Creature; consequently, he did not suppose

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that

that *Eve* was beguiled by the Subtilty of an irrational Creature. But St. *John* comes nearer to the Point in *Rev.* xii. 9. xx. 2. Where he speaks of the Serpent as a *Deceiver*, and describes him after this Manner, *and the great Dragon was cast out, that old Serpent; called otherwise in Scripture, the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole World.* A Dragon is a huge overgrown Serpent. *That old Serpent*, means that Serpent, which of old, at the Beginning of the World deceived *Eve*, and still was deceiving the World. (And in several other Places of Scripture, which we shall presently have Occasion to take Notice of, the Devil's Temptation of *Eve* is plainly alluded to.) Therefore this *Serpent*, and the *Devil* and *Satan*, are synonymous, and mean one and the same Being. Hence Divines have justly concluded, that it was the *Devil* or *Satan*, an evil or malignant Spirit, which tempted *Eve*, in the Body, or assuming the Form and Shape, of a Serpent; which then might be a very beautiful as well as sagacious Animal, familiar with *Adam* and *Eve*, and much admired by them.

THAT there are wicked and malignant Spirits, is undeniably true from Scripture. *2 Pet.* ii. 4. *For if God spared not the Angels that sined, but σείραυς ζοφε ταπταρωσας cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into Chains of Darkness, to be reserved unto Judgment.*

ment. [Or rather, cast them down into a low, wretched Condition, in Chains of Darknefs, delivered them to be reserved unto Judgment.] Jude 6. *And the Angels which kept not their first Estate, but left their own Habitation, be hath reserved δεσμοις αιδιοις υπο ζοφου in everlasting Chains under Darknefs, unto the Judgment of the great Day.* Being cast down to Hell, and delivered into Chains of Darknefs, in St. Peter, is the same as being reserved in perpetual Chains under Darknefs, in St. Jude; and may signify no more than, that they are degraded from their former high and glorious State, and chained, or confined to, a much lower, narrower, and darker Situation, without any Hope of Favor, unto the Day of Judgment; when they, with all Workers of Iniquity, shall be cast into everlasting Fire, *Mat. xxv. 41. Rev. xx. 10, 15.* For any thing, therefore, advanced in those two Places, those fallen Angels may, at present, reside in our Air, and be permitted to wander about in the Earth.

It must be observed, that there is an Ambiguity in both the Words, שטן *Satan*, and Διαβολα the *Devil*. The former, *Satan*, signifies any Adversary among Men and good Angels, as well as among evil Spirits. *Num. xii. 32. And the Angel of the Lord said,—behold, I went out to withstand thee, לשטן יצאתי* for an Adversary, a Satan. So 2 Sam. xix. 22. — *Ye Sons of Zeruiab are Adver-*

saries. 1 Kin. v. 4. xi. 14, 23, 25. Psal. lxxi. 13. cix. 20, 29 *Peter* was Satan, an Adversary, to our Lord, *Mat.* xvi. 23. And the unbelieving *Jews* were the Satan, or Adversaries, who hindered St. *Paul's* Return to *Thessalonica*, 1 *Theff.* ii. 18. Διαβολος *Devil*, signifies an Accuser, Slanderer. *Job.* vi. 70. — and one of you, *Judas*, is Διαβολος a Devil: 1 *Tim.* iii. 11. *Their Wives must be grave*, μη Διαβολας not Devils, i. e. Accusers, Slanderers. 2 *Tim.* iii. 3. *false Accusers*, Tit. ii. 3. Thus it may be applied to any wicked Persons, who slander, accuse, and persecute the People of God. And this Ambiguity in the Sense of those two Words, שטן and Διαβολος, may render it doubtful how some particular Passages of Scripture are to be understood.

THAT those two Words are used to signify one and the same wicked Spirit, who, with many others his Angels, or under-Agents, are conversant in our World, and endeavour to draw Men into Sin, and do Mischief among us, is very evident from Revelation. As in the Case of our first Parents, of *Job*, whose Children and Substance were destroyed, and his Body afflicted with a grievous Disorder by *Satan*, *Job* i. 12, &c. ii. 6, 7; of our Lord, who was tempted of the *Devil*, or *Satan*, *Mat.* iv. 1, 3, 10. *Mark* i. 13. *Luke* iv. 2. Which Temptation, under all its Circumstances, can never be

be resolved into an Allegory ; much less can it be supposed to be all transacted within our Lord's own Mind, as if the Devil, or Satan, was no other than the Suggestions, or Thoughts, that arose in his own Heart ; which is very absurd. Nor can the following Texts be naturally understood of any other than a real Devil or Satan. *Mat. xiii. 39. The Enemy that sowed the Tares is the Devil, [and his Instruments]* *Mark iii. 26. How can Satan cast out Satan ?* *Joh. viii. 44. Ye are of your Father the Devil.* *Acts x. 38. — Healing all that were oppressed of the Devil.* *2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. For such are false Apostles, deceitful Workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light.* *Heb. ii. 14. That through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of [subjecting our first Parents, and their Posterity, to] Death, that is, the Devil.* *2 Tim. 2, 16. — recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil.* *Jam. iv. 7. Resist the Devil, and he shall flee from you.* *1 Joh. iii. 8. He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil ; for the Devil sineth from the Beginning [of the World, alluding to his tempting our first Parents into Sin ;] for this cause the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* *Jude 9. Yet Michael, the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the Body*

of *Moses*. And generally, *Satan* and *Devil* are thus to be understood in the New Testament, the few Places before mentioned only excepted. Though where the Devil is principally intended, his Instruments, or wicked Agents among Men, may, at the same Time, be connoted.

BESIDES *Satan*, or the Devil, the Scripture frequently mentions other evil Spirits, called δαίμονια. δαίμονες, *Dæmons*, which we translate *Devils*. That these *Dæmons*, however understood in prophane Authors, do belong to the Devil's Retinue, and may be his Angels or Under-Agents, over whom he is Chief or Prince, will appear by comparing *Mat.* xii. 22, 24,—28. *Luke* x. 17, 18. xi 15, 18. Those who in the Gospels are said to be δαιμονιζόμενοι possessed by *Dæmons*, in *Acts* x. 38. are said to be *oppressed of the Devil*, υπο του Διαβολου, as they were under the Power of his Agents. Thus we may conceive of *the Devil and his Angels*, *Mat.* xxv. 41 *the Dragon and his Angels*, *Rev.* xii. 7 He is the Prince and Head, and those *Dæmons* are his Subjects. They are often spoken of in the plural Number, as being many; though *Satan*, or the *Devil*, is always in the singular, as being but one single Spirit, and Chief over all the rest. But, as before observed, his Angels, or Agents, may sometimes be included with him.

THE Characters which the Devil or Satan sustains in Scripture, are these, the *great Dragon*, or fierce Devourer, the *old Serpent*, full of villainous Subtilty, *Rev. xii. 9.* The *Wicked One*, *Mat. xiii. 38. 1 Joh. iii. 12.* A *Murthurer and Liar*, *Joh. viii. 44. Ye are of your Father, the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father will ye do ; he was a Murthurer from the Bgining*, [in effecting the Death of *Adam* and his Posterity ; and thus he may be said to have had the Power of Death, *Heb. ii. 14.*] *and abode not in the Truth, because there is no Truth in him. When he speaketh a Lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a Liar*, [as he was to *Eve*,] *and the Father of it. The Accuser of the Brethren*, *Rev. xii. 10.* [See *Job i. 6—13. ii. 1—7.*] *A roaring Lion*, [the Lion roars only when he is hungry, *Psal. xxii. 13. Ezek. xxii. 25.*] *seeking whom he may devour.* The *Prince of the World*, meaning, as it is corrupt and wicked, *John xii. 31. xiv. 30. xvi. 11.* The *Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience*, the idolatrous Heathen, *Ephes. ii. 2.* Here the Devil is represented as a Prince, or Sovereign, at the Head of a Kingdom, which stands in Opposition to, and is at war with, the Kingdom of *Christ* ; who was manifested as his Antagonist, *that he might destroy the Works of the Devil*, *1 John iii. 8.*

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THE Dæmons are characterized as the *Devil's Angels*, Mat. xxv. 41. As *unclean Spirits*, Mark v. 2, 8, 12. Luke iv. 33, 36. viii. 27, 29. *Evil*, wicked, *Spirits*, Luke viii. 2.

THESE vicious Spirits, the Devil and his Angels, when permitted, are capable of doing any Mischief to the Estate, Body or Mind, 1 Sam. xvi. 14. *Job* i. 12, &c. ii. 6, 7. Mark iii. 23, 26. Luke xiii. 16. 1 Cor. v. 5. 1 Tim. i. 20. Nor is there any Absurdity, any thing inconsistent with the Divine Goodness, in supposing that evil Spirits may inflict Calamities and Disorders upon Mankind. For they are only Instruments in God's Hands, under his Direction and Controul, as much as any other Cause whatever; and so must come under the same Rules, as any other Means, which Providence may imploy in distressing or destroying human Life, as Storms, Inundations, the Passions and Powers of wicked Men, a putrid Air, vitiated Humors in the Body, &c. In all these Cases, whatever is the instrumental, God is the appointing and directing Cause; and it would have been all one, whether he had sent a good or evil Angel, or had only changed the Temperature of the Air, to destroy the *Israelites* by Pestilence, 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16. Or to slay *Sennacherib's* Army. 2 King. xix. 35. 2 Chron. xxxii. 21.

In

In correcting or punishing by Diseases, or other Distresses, God may use what Instruments he pleases.

THUS far we may go upon this Part of the Subject, and not much further. The World of Spirits lies so far out of our Sight, that we can know no more of them, than what is reveled. Nor have we Principles sufficient to enable us to form clear and compleat Notions of every thing said concerning them even in Revelation.

THAT which most of all requires our Attention, is, that the Devil delighteth in seducing Mankind to sin against God, and takes every Advantage, and uses every Wile to effect his wicked Purpose. *Rev. xii. 9. The great Dragon, called the Devil and Satan, deceiveth the whole World. Mat. xiii. 39. The Enemy that sowed them, the Tares, i. e. wicked Men, is the Devil.* Of which we have a Specimen in his Temptation of our first Parents. He concealed himself in the Body, or Shape of a Serpent, probably, at that time, a Creature admired by *Adam* and *Eve* for it's Beauty and Sagacity. He first addressed the Woman, when alone, and at a Distance from her Husband; and first endeavored to weaken her Sense of the Obligation of the Divine Prohibition, by representing it as uncertain or unreasonable. *Ver. 1. Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every Tree in the Garden?* " Surely you mistake
" him ;

“ him ; it can never be so ; for why should
 “ God debar you of any of the inno-
 “ cent and delightful Fruits this Garden
 “ yields ? ” The Woman exposed herself
 to the greatest Danger by deliberating with
 the Tempter, upon a Matter which she
 should not have heard so much as called in
 Question without Abhorrence. But she was
 not aware of his wicked Design ; and there-
 fore, in much Simplicity, gave him a full
 Account of the Law they were under, *Ver.*
2. 3. Which only gave him, on the other
 Hand, an Opportunity of contradicting it by
 a most bold and impudent Lie, *Ver. 4. Ye*
shall not surely die. Yea, he assures her,
 they should receive great Advantage by eat-
 ing the forbidden Fruit, *Ver. 5. For God doth*
know, that in the Day ye eat thereof, then
your Eyes shall be opened ; and ye shall be as
Gods, knowing Good and Evil. To favor his
 Assertion, he perverts the Word of God, by
 wresting the Name God had given the
 Tree ; as if it had been called, *the Tree of*
Knowledge of Good and Evil, because God
 was aware it would endow them with the
 most exalted and extensive Knowledge ;
 whereas it had its Name upon a very differ-
 ent Account.

THUS Satan persuades Men to have hard
 Thoughts of God, as if he envied our Hap-
 piness, and laid the Restraints of his Law
 upon our Appetites out of Ill-will ; but in-
 finite

finite Goodness is not capable of Envy. Thus he tempteth us to be uneasy in the Condition Providence has allotted us, and prompts us to be ambitious of things too high for us. And thus he deludeth with false Hopes of Benefit and Advantage from Sin ; and, when this last Point is gained, we fall an easy Prey to the Tempter. *Ver. 6.* *And when the Woman saw that the Tree was good for Food, and that it was pleasant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the Fruit thereof and did eat.* “ She saw it was to be desired to make one “ wise.” What wrought this Opinion in *Eve* was, possibly, the Assurance the Serpent gave her, that he which, she very well knew, before was, like other Brutes, dumb and irrational, was, by the admirable Virtue of the Fruit, advanced in Speech and Reason, as she saw, to an equality with herself, the most excellent Creature in the Earth ; and, therefore, she needed not doubt but it would, in the same Proportion, exalt the human Nature to the high Perfection of the angelic Order. This would pass for Demonstration with her, who knew not that it was an evil Spirit that acted and spake in the Serpent. But this is only my own Conjecture. — *And she gave also unto her Husband with her, and he did eat ;* being, probably, persuaded (besides the Arguments the Serpent used with *Eve*) by the strong Affection

fection they had for each other. Thus the Devil, by tempting our first Parents to transgress the Law, subjected them, and their Posterity in them, to eternal Death. Thus he was a Murtherer, and may be said to have *had the Power of Death.* Heb. ii. 14.

C H A P. XII.

Reflections on the DEVIL'S TEMPTATIONS.

BY searching the Scriptures we have found, that there is a malicious Spirit which, by divine Permission, ranges about this World, attended with many more of the same depraved Nature; and, as any Opportunity offers, is endeavouring to draw Men from the Practice of Virtue, into all Wickedness and Alienation from the Truth.

To prevent any Cavils against the scriptural Account of this wicked Spirit, let it be well observed,

I. **T**HAT we cannot be sure, from any unassisted Knowledge or Observation of our own, that this Earth is not frequented by numerous Spirits of a Nature much superior to the human. Our Knowledge even of the Animals, which naturally belong to our Globe, hath been, and probably still is, very defective. Without the Help of Microscopes we could never have discerned vast
Tribes

Tribes of Insects, which we now plainly see do live and move even in our own Bodies, and in all Parts of the Earth and Water. And even with this Advantage of Sight, there may still be a World of smaller Animals, which our Senses cannot reach. Much more may Myriads of Spirits be mixed amongst us, which come not under our Observation. Therefore, as without the Aid of Microscopes we should never have discovered the most numerous Part of the Inhabitants of our Earth ; so neither, without the Light of Revelation, can we be ascertained, what Spirits are and act in the Region of our Air. And Revelation is a Mean as proper, at least, for discovering the one, as our own artificial Inventions for discovering the other. But Revelation informs us, that Angels, both good and bad, are conversant in this World ; which may be true, though we have no distinct, sensible Perceptions of their Existence and Operations. Under former Dispensations of Religion they might appear, and act in a sensible Manner ; but under the present Dispensation they may, for wise Reasons, (particularly, because we are now sufficiently instructed in their Nature and Agency,) be wholly invisible : nor may we be capable of distinguishing their secret internal Impressions from the Suggestions of our own Minds ; or the external, kind Assurances of good Angels,

gels, or the malicious Injuries of evil Angels, from the common Course of Providence.

II. THAT we are now upon Trial hath been already proved ; and that our Trial is well and wisely adjusted, cannot be doubted. We ourselves are by no Means capable of judging what kind of Trials are most suitable to our own Spirits, because we know but little of the Nature of them. To settle the Kind and Degree of our Trials, belongs entirely to him, who alone understands the Nature of our Minds, and the Designs of his own Wisdom. Therefore, if we are shocked when we hear God hath permitted many evil Spirits to range our World, and to exercise their Malice in tempting Mankind, we are really shocked at our own Ignorance ; seeing this Method of Trial, as well as the rest, is under Regulations of infinite Wisdom, and designed for the Purposes of infinite Goodness.

OBJECTION. " SUPPOSE God hath
 " for wise Ends permitted such Beings to
 " mingle among Mankind, is it not very
 " strange that any should be found so ma-
 " licious as to imploy that Permission to the
 " worst of Purposes ? How can we suppose
 " any Spirits, any Intelligences, especially
 " of a superior Nature, so far abandoned to
 " all sense of Goodness and Virtue, as to
 " endeavor

“ endeavor without ceasing the Corruption
“ and Perdition of their Fellow-Creatures ? ”

ANSWER. THAT Wickedness exists in the Universe is too plain from the State of things in that Part of it, which we inhabit ; where we see great Numbers, in spite of their own Reason and Understanding, and of all the instances of God's Love and Goodness, and of all the most evident and powerful Arguments to Virtue and Piety, who not only are very vicious themselves, but take an unnatural Pleasure in tempting and corrupting others, and making them as bad as themselves. It cannot then be hard to suppose, that there are other Spirits, in other Circumstances, who, in the same Manner, oppose God ; that is to say, oppose Truth and Virtue. For the Devil opposeth and seteth himself against God, not by Might and Power, as if he were able to contend with the Almighty, but only as he opposeth Virtue and Truth ; just as wicked Men do among ourselves. Indeed, we Men are under strong Temptations from the Flesh, and the Objects that relate to it ; but the Spirits we are speaking of, may be under as strong Temptations of some other Kind, that we are not acquainted with ; they may, by some sinful Pursuits and Compliances, have sunk themselves into the last Degrees of moral Pravity, and even be more wicked than the wickedest Man in the
K Earth,

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Earth, more blind to the Goodness of God, and more fearless of his Wrath. Nor are superior natural Abilities an absolute Security against the very worst moral Corruption. For we do actually find, that great Knowledge and Understanding are so far from always making Men good and virtuous, that, on the contrary, these are often in a high degree the Instruments of Sin and Disobedience; being wholly imployed in finding out Pleas and Pretexts for the most abandoned Iniquity.

THUS you see it is very possible such vicious Spirits may be, may be mixed among us, and permitted to tempt us; and, according to Scripture Representations, they are very dangerous Enemies. For,

I. SATAN is continually going about seeking all Advantages against us, Job i. 7. *The Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Satan answered, and said,—From going to and fro in the Earth, and from walking up and down in it.* And from the Query in the next Verse, *Hast thou considered my Servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God and escheweth Evil?* And also from what our Saviour saith to Peter, Luke xxii. 31. *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as Wheat;* it appears, that he is inquisitive into the Characters of Men, and busily seeks, and gladly

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gladly lays hold of any Occasion to try, and, if possible, to overthrow their Integrity. 1 Cor. vii. 5. *Defraud you not one the other, except it be with Consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to Fasting and Prayer ; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your Incontinency.*

II. WE may suppose a Spirit of superior Faculties to be very subtil in understanding our various Constitutions and Inclinations, and the particular Sins to which our Circumstances do expose us ; and in laying his Baits, and addressing his Temptations accordingly.

III. SUCH a Tempter can apply a great variety of Machinations, Devices, [νοηματα, 2 Cor. ii. 11.] and Wiles [μεθοδειας, Ephes. vi. 11.] to deceive. This is seen in the Case of *Eve*. And in tempting our Lord, it is very observable, how he varied his Devices, and shifted the Scene of Temptation, to fix, if possible, some Stain upon his spotless Mind. He can put himself into any Shape, either of Terror, or pleasing Allurement ; either as a roaring Lion, or an Angel of Light, [2 Cor. xi. 14.] Sometimes he works by his Agents, imploying those who are already insnared to draw in others ; so *Eve* was his Tool to tempt *Adam* : sometimes injecting into our Minds unrighteous, impure Suggestions, [Luke xxii. 3. Acts v. 3.] sometimes taking the Word out of our

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Heart, [*Luke viii. 12.*] or mixing Tares with the good Seed, [*Mat. xiii. 25.*] and corrupting our Minds from the Simplicity that is in Christ.

BUT then, all this must be understood under the following Restrictions.

1. THAT the Devil can neither hurt us, nor so much as attempt to hurt us, further than God permits. He is not like the pretended evil God of the *Manichees*, eternal, self-existent, almighty, and independent, but as much under the Power of God as the weakest Reptile under our Feet. When God gives him a Commission, he cannot act beyond it ; and when he has no Commission, he is chained up and can do nothing. He is therefore no other than an Agent, entirely and always in God's Hand, to be used as he sees fit.

2. NOR can he any ways pollute our Minds, further than we ourselves do consent. If God permits, possibly he may work upon the Humors of the Body, he may inflame our Passions, abuse our Imaginations, or suggest evil things to our Thoughts ; but unless we willingly admit those Impressions, he cannot possibly stain our Consciences with Sin.

3. GOD hath not only furnished Means and Strength to resist him, but hath appointed that, if we do resist him, he shall be conquered and vanquished. *Jam. iv. 7.*
Resist

Resist the Devil, and he will, he shall, he must, flee from you; not by his own Choice, but by the Will and Power of God. The God of our Peace and Safety shall bruise Satan under our Feet. And such a Victory shall turn to the Praise and Glory and Establishment of our Virtue. Hence it follows,

1. THAT it must be our own Act and Deed if we are overcome by the Temptations of the Devil. It is common for People to consider themselves as altogether *passive* in this Case, and to ascribe the Wickedness they commit to the Power of Temptation; whereas, in truth, so far as we are tempted *effectually* we are *active*, we consent and agree to the Temptation, we are drawn away of our own Lust and enticed, *Jam. i. 14.* Satan tempts, yet can have no Advantage over us but what we chuse to give him. And therefore,

2. IT must be an Aggravation of any Crime that it was done under the Power and Influence of this wicked Spirit. For we must be *the Children of Disobedience*, we must have abandoned ourselves to Wickedness, before Satan can *work in us.* If *Satan* can fill our Hearts, consider in what a wretched Condition we must be. We must have abused the Faculties of our Minds, we must have despised all the Riches of Divine Goodness, we must have shut our Eyes against the Light of saving Truth, hardened

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our Hearts against the Fear of God, scared our Consciences, stifled many and strong Convictions, done despite to the Spirit of Grace ; we must have withdrawn ourselves from God, till he hath forsaken us ; we must have advanced from one Degree of Iniquity to another, till our Hearts are prepared to be the Seat and Residence of the unclean Spirit, the Murtherer, the Father of Lies, the Prince of Darkness. A Condition unspeakably deplorable !

WITH Men of Virtue and Piety he hath no Power, though he may vex and assault them, but only with the Vicious. And they not only imitate his Wickedness, which is bad enough, and constitutes him their *Father*, but likewise are under his Government, which is still worse, and constitutes him their Prince and Ruler. Most dreadful Case, to be the Children of such a Father, the Subjects of such a Prince, the Children of Perdition, the Subjects of the Enemy of all Righteousness ! To have the Powers of our Minds, designed for the noblest Acts and Enjoyments, under the Dominion of Error and Lust ; to have the Spirits created for eternal Happiness in Union with God, in Slavery to the vilest of Beings ; to have the Souls, for whom Christ shed his Blood, to deliver them from Iniquity, to purify them into the Divine Image, and to prepare them for everlasting Salvation ; to
have

have those Souls quite insensible to all that is true and excellent, heavenly and divine, guided by the grand Deceiver, in the Power of the Destroyer, and by him pushed on in the way of Iniquity to eternal Perdition, how frightful is the Reflection ; how dreadful must the State of such Souls be !

To prevent our falling into such a sad Condition, and to secure ourselves from the Encroachments of this wicked Spirit, let us ever be mindful that we have such an Enemy, and that, without due Care and Circumspection, we shall fall under his Power. Let us carefully guard our Hearts, and observe well the Temper and Frame of our Minds, that we may seasonably restrain every inordinate Affection, and immediately reject every evil Thought and Suggestion which starts up in our Minds. Be sober, be vigilant. Nothing gives this Adversary greater Advantage than sensual Indulgences. Mortify the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts. Shun all Intemperance and Excess ; and never dare to venture, how little soever, into the way of Temptation and Sin. And let us be sure to keep close to God in Prayer, and other Exercises of Religion. Thus we shall put ourselves under the Banner of the Prince of Life, the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall be kept by the Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation.

C H A P. XIII.

*Of the Consequences of ADAM'S TRANS-
GRESSION.**Gen. ii. 7, to the End.*

WE are now come to a very grand Point in Theology, the Fall of Man, or the Consequences of *Adam's* Transgression upon himself and his Posterity. Which Consequences Divines, both Papist and Protestant, have generally, and for a long tract of Time, represented to be those that follow, namely, “ the Guilt of *Adam's* first
 “ Sin imputed to, or charged upon, all his
 “ Posterity — a total Defect of that Righteousness, wherein he is supposed to have
 “ been created — the Corruption of the human Nature, whereby all Mankind are
 “ utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good,
 “ and wholly inclined to all Evil, and that
 “ continually ; which Corruption of our
 “ Nature is the Source of all Wickedness
 “ that is committed in the World. — Further, by *Adam's* Transgression all Mankind were deprived of Communion with
 “ God — and all, as soon as ever they come
 “ into the World, under his Displeasure and
 “ Curse,

“ Curse, being by Nature the Children of
 “ Wrath, Bond-slaves to Satan, justly liable
 “ to all Punishments in this World, and in
 “ the World to come, to an everlasting
 “ Separation from the comfortable Presence
 “ of God, the most grievous Torments in
 “ Soul and Body without Intermission in
 “ Hell-Fire for ever.”

THIS is an Affair of the most dreadful Importance, and requires to be examined with all possible Care and Impartiality. For an Error in this Point will affect the whole Scheme of Christianity, pervert and abuse our Consciences, and give us very wrong Notions of God and of ourselves. Upon this Article I have examined the Scriptures, with Diligence and Impartiality, in the Treatise entitled — *The Scripture Doctrine of original Sin, proposed to free and candid Examination* — in the Study of which this is a proper Place to exercise your Thoughts and Judgments.

[* ADAM having transgressed the Law, not only lost a Claim to Life, but became obnoxious to Death, which was *Death in Law*, or eternal Death. And had the Law been immediately executed, his Posterity, then included in his Loins, must have been
 extinct,

* Take this in, as a Note, P. 18. of *Scripture Doctrine of original Sin*, at the Paragraph, 1. *Whereas Adam had before.* &c.

extinct, or could have had no Existence at all. For, the Covenant of Innocence being broken, there was no Covenant or Constitution subsisting upon which *Adam* could have the least Hope of the Continuance of his own Life, and consequently, could have no Prospect of any Posterity. Thus *in Adam all die*. While things were in this State, under broken Law, and before a Promise of Favor, or Grace, in this Interval, for any thing *Adam* could know, he, and the whole World in him, were utterly lost and undone for ever. But our merciful God and Father had quite different Views. He graciously intended to make *Adam's* Sin, and his being exposed to eternal Death, an Occasion of erecting a new Dispensation, a Dispensation of Grace in the Hands of a Mediator. According to which, *Adam* was assured that he should not immediately die, but should live to have a Posterity by his Wife. So *Adam* understood what the Lord God said, *Ver. 15*. And upon this he gave his Wife a new Name, (*Ver. 20.*) חַיָּה *Life*, or *Life-giving*, for Joy that Mankind were to be propagated from her, when he expected nothing but immediate Death in Consequence of his Transgression.]

{† God graciously intended, after *Adam's* Transgression, to erect a Dispensation of Grace,

† Take this in, as a Note, P. 66. of *Scripture Doctrine of original Sin*, at No. *Immediately upon the annulling the first Covenant, &c.*

Grace, for the Redemption of Mankind. Which Grace was declared, and, consequently, which Dispensation was established, (*Gen. iii. 15. And I will put Enmity, &c.*) before the Sentence of Death was pronounced upon *Adam*, (*Ver. 19. Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return.*) Death therefore, in that Sentence, stands under the new Dispensation, or the Dispensation of Grace, and for that Reason cannot be *Death in Law*, or eternal Death ; but *Death in Dispensation*, or Death appointed for wise and good Purposes, and to be continued only so long as God should think fit. And thus also *all die in Adam* ; thus by *Man came Death* ; thus by *one Man Sin entered into the World*, and *Death by*, or in Consequence of, his *Sin*. But it was the high and glorious Purpose of God, that his beloved Son, *the Seed of the Woman*, having, in our Flesh, performed the most perfect and compleat Obedience, should be invested with Dominion and Power to raise all Men from the Dead, and to give eternal Life to all them that tread in the Steps of his Obedience. Thus, *as by Man came Death*, by *Man came also the Resurrection from the Dead* ; *for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.* 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. Thus, *as by the Offence of one Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation* ; even so by the *Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men*

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Men unto Justification. For as by one Man's Disobedience the many were made Sinners ; so by the Obedience of one shall the many be made Righteous. Rom. v. 18, 19.]

C H A P. XIV.

Of the Origin of SACRIFICES.

Gen. iv. 1—6.

HERE *Cain* and *Abel* perform an Act of religious Devotion, by way of Oblation or Sacrifice. The Question is, whether this kind of Worship was of divine or human Institution. They who are of the latter Opinion alledge, “ that we read of no “ Command from God for sacrificing ; there- “ fore Men did it of their own Heads, out “ of a grateful Inclination to return unto “ God some of his own Blessings, and to “ acknowledge him the absolute Proprietor “ of all their Enjoyments ; though they had “ no Directions from him about it.” Answer. This seems highly improbable. For how came *Abel* to offer his Sacrifice in Faith of God's Acceptance, (*Heb. xi. 4.*) if his Faith had nothing to warrant it but his own Imagination ? Human Imagination, or Opinion, never was, or ever can be, either the Ground or Object of *Faith*. It is said, *Gen. iv. 4.*
that

that God had respect to, or shewed his Approbation of, both *Abel* and *his Offering*; or in the Apostle's Words, *he obtained Witness, that himself was righteous, God testifying of his Gifts*, that they were right, and offered in a right Manner. On the other hand, he censured *Cain* as having presented his Oblation in such a Manner as was not pleasing to God. Which evidently supposes a previous Institution, and a Rule which *Cain* was, or might have been acquainted with. For had there not been such a Rule given, how could he have been blamed for not observing it? It is absurd to say, he transgressed a Rule of his own Imagination and Invention.

THE Institution's not being mentioned in a History so concise argues nothing. Other things are also omitted, as religious Assemblies, *Enoch's Prophecy*, *Noah's Preaching*, the peopling of the World, or the Increase of *Adam's Family*. Things well known, or generally supposed, when the Historian wrote, needed not to be mentioned, but might be taken for granted. The only proper and conclusive Argument would be to prove, "that in those early Days they
" had no Communication with, or Revelation
" from God; and therefore, having no way
" of knowing what the Mind of the Lord
" was, were under a Necessity of inventing
" something of their own." But this is far
" from

from being the Cause. God, in some visible Form, frequently appeared, and made his Mind known to *Adam*, and to all the succeeding Patriarchs, mentioned in the Book of *Genesis*, for the Space of 2315 Years. Yea, he conversed and reasoned with and instructed *Cain* himself. When therefore *Adam*, and all the other Patriarchs, had the fullest Opportunity of knowing from God himself, what kind of Worship was most acceptable to him, there was no need of their own Invention ; and it is absurd to suppose that they followed no other Guide.

IN the Infancy of the Church they wanted Direction, and, without doubt, were directed in every thing relating to Religion especially, so far as was agreeable to that Dispensation. Doubtless *Adam* was instructed by God to sacrifice. And it is not improbable that those Beasts, with the Skins of which *Adam* and *Eve* were clothed, *Gen.* iii. 21. were slain as Sacrifices. God certainly instructed our first Parents in the Faith and Worship, which the alteration in their Circumstances required. Having made a most gracious Covenant with them (*Ver.* 15.) it is not unreasonable to suppose, that he also signified to them, that they should, for a perpetual Ratification and Assurance of it to their Faith, offer to him Sacrifices. For by the Blood of Sacrifices Covenants were ratified in after Times. The eating
of

of the Tree of Life, was a covenanting Action, (assuring Immortality to their continued Obedience) suitable to a State of Innocence. But the Maſtation of a living Creature, (exprefſing the deadly Nature of Sin, at the ſame time that it aſſured them of eternal Life through a ſacrificed Redeemer) was more ſuitable to a State of Guilt.

Ver. 3. *C A I N* brought מִן הָאֲדָמָה of the Fruit of the Ground, &c. Ver. 4. *And Abel alſo brought of the Firſtlings of the Flock, &c.* “ As there were ſome ſolemn Times
“ of making their devout Acknowledg-
“ ments to God ; ſo, I doubt not, there
“ was ſome ſet Place, where they aſſembled
“ for that Purpoſe. For the Hebrew Word
“ for *brought*, is never uſed in relation to
“ domeſtic, or private Sacrifices ; but al-
“ ways in relation to thoſe public Sacrifices,
“ which were brought to the Door of the
“ Tabernacle of the Congregation. As *Lev.*
“ iv. 4. *He ſhall bring יָרֵבֵּיאַ the Bullock to*
“ *the Door, &c.* Which occurs all along,
“ eſpecially in the ninth Chapter of that
“ Book.

“ AND therefore, I ſuppoſe, they brought
“ theſe Sacrifices, here mentioned, to ſome
“ fixed [public] Place, where the *Shechinah*,
“ or glorious Preſence of God, appeared.
“ For as they muſt have ſome ſetled Place,
“ where they [publicly] performed ſacred
“ Offices,

“ Offices, it is most reasonable to think
 “ it had, in those early Days, respect to
 “ the *Shechinah*, or Divine Presence, as
 “ well as afterwards under the Mosaic Dis-
 “ pensation, [when the Divine Presence re-
 “ sided] in the Tabernacle and Temple.
 “ And therefore they are said to *appear be-*
 “ *fore God*, [Exod. xxiii. 17. xxxiv. 24.
 “ Psal. xlii. 2, &c. or to *present themselves*
 “ *before the Lord*, Job i. 6.” *]

THAT some visible Token of the Presence of God appeared in their religious Assemblies, in those earliest Days of the Church, and spake and conversed with them, as Occasion required, is evident enough. So the Lord God appeared frequently and familiarly to *Adam*. He held a Conference with *Cain* in such a Manner as plainly shews it was no extraordinary thing. And *when the Sons, or Children, of God came together to present themselves before the Lord*, the Lord is represented as discoursing with *Satan* about the Character and Circumstances of *Job*. Job i. 6—12. ii. 1—7.

WHILE Men were not so numerous, but that they might all assemble together at one Place, probably the *Shechinah* stately appeared among them every Sabbath. But when they were so numerous, that they could not ordinarily meet together once a Week, and therefore were under a Necessity of

* Bishop *Patrick's* Comment. in loco.

of performing their Worship in separate and remote Places ; yet the *Shechinah*, or Token of the divine Presence, might still remain and appear as usual in that original Place, where *Adam* and his immediate Descendents had first attended upon Divine Service, and where the Patriarchs, in a right Line descended from *Adam*, had their place of Residence. There, probably, *Noah* builded his Altar, and there the Lord conversed with him. *Gen.* viii. 20, &c. ix. 1—18. There *Rebekah* went to enquire of the Lord. *Gen.* xxv. 22, 23 ; and she received an Answer, probably, from the *Shechinah* or divine Presence.

FROM all this it seems not unlikely, that *Cain* and *Abel's* Offerings were performed before the whole Assembly of *Adam's* Family, (which then must have been considerably increased,) and that the divine Acceptance of the one, and Rejection of the other, was signified by some visible Mark, which appeared and was observed by the whole Congregation. It would add very much to *Cain's* Disgust to find himself so openly disparaged, and sunk so much in the Favor of God, and the Esteem of the whole Family, below his younger Brother ; over whom, on that sole account, as he was the First-born, he claimed Pre-eminence, and expected, whatever his Character was, pious or impious, to have been preferred before him.

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THE Mark, by which the Lord God testified his Acceptance of *Abel* and his Sacrifice, was, probably, a Stream of Fire issuing from the *Shechinah*, which consumed his Sacrifice. So *Gen. xv. 17. A smoking Furnace and burning Lamp*, i. e. the *Shechinah*, *passed between the Pieces* of the Sacrifice, and consumed them, in Confirmation of the Covenant. And we have many other Examples of this kind in sacred History ; as when *Moses* offered the first great Burnt-offering. *Lev. ix. 24.* When *Gideon* offered upon the Rock. *Judg. vi. 21.* When *David* stayed the Plague. *1 Chron. xxi. 26.* And *Solomon* consecrated the Temple. *2 Chron. vii. 13.* And when *Elijah* contended with the *Baalites*. *1 Kings xviii. 38, &c.* whence the *Israelites*, *Psal. xx. 3*, wishing all Prosperity to their King, pray that God would accept [יְשַׁנָּה] *turn into Askes*] his Burnt-offering.

Ver. 6, 7. THE Lord God reproved *Cain* for the Disgust and Indignation he had conceived against his Brother, instructing him in the Terms of divine Acceptance. *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?* Most certainly — For I have an impartial Regard to true Piety, wheresoever I find it. *But if thou dost not well, Sin* (i. e. the Punishment of Sin, as *Ver. 13*, and *Chap. xix. 15*, and several other Places,) *lieth couching at the Door, ready to fall upon thee ; and unto thee*

thee shall be his Desire, and thou shalt rule over him. Three things are here suggested to appease his Resentment. 1. That the Reason of his not being respected was not in his Brother, but in himself; for if he had done well, he would have been as much respected. 2. That if he did ill, he had no Reason to expect the divine Favor, but the Reverse. 3. That this should not alter his civil Right, nor give *Abel* any Authority over him, but he should still retain the Privilege of his Birth-right. Note — This shews, that the Privileges of the Birth-right had been previously settled, either by divine Appointment, or Approbation.

BUT the Rancor of *Cain's* Mind could not thus be cured. Being of the *Wicked One*, the Murtherer, who had lately attempted to destroy all Mankind, he took an Opportunity, and slew his Brother. Possibly the next Sabbath, *Abel's* Place being empty in the Assembly of *Adam's* Family, the Lord addressed himself to *Cain*, charged him with his Crime, and, in Punishment of it, banished him from the Country, where *Adam* and his Family resided; by rendering the Ground barren to him, insomuch that, notwithstanding all his Endeavours, it should not yield him any Increase. This would necessarily oblige him to go seek a Subsistence in some other Place. To this Sentence *Cain* remonstrates as too severe, [and by the

Bye, his familiar, indeed too familiar, Manner of answering the *Shechinah*, shews, that such Appearances of the divine Presence were common and customary] apprehending he should thereby *be hid from the Face of the Lord*, (Ver. 14.) or deprived of his Care and Inspection, and considered by all Mankind as a strolling Brute, exposed to their Hatred, and in continual Danger of being destroyed. But God, who for wise and holy Ends often protects and prolongs the Lives even of very wicked Men, intended that *Cain* should live ; either that he might have Space to repent, or, being impenitent, might remain a Monument of divine Justice. And therefore, before the whole Assembly, threatened a worse Punishment than *Cain's* to the Man, who should, by killing him, defeat the divine Sentence, or frustrate his Grace.

AND the Lord set a Mark אֹת upon Cain, &c. In the Hebrew it is, *And the Lord set, or exhibited, a Token to Cain, that no one, who met him, should kill him ; i. e. gave him some Pledge or Assurance, declared either in Words, as by an Oath, or by some outward Token, that his Life should be preserved.* So the Spies gave *Rabab a Token, אֹת אִמָּת*, that her Life, and the Lives of all her Relations, should be preserved. *Joshua* ii. 12—14. This Token to *Rabab* seems to have been a solemn Oath ; for the
scarlet

scarlet Cord was not a Token to *Rahab*, but to the Spies, to distinguish her House. *N. B.* I do not find in Scripture, that *אֶזְרָח* ever signifies a Mark, or Brand, impressed upon a Man's Body, but always some external Assurance, or Pledge given by God. *Gen. ix. 13. xvii. 11. 1 Sam. ii. 34. xiv. 10. 2 King. xix. 28. Isai. xxxviii. 7, 8. Jer. xlv. 29, &c. &c.*

Ver. 16. AND *Cain*, by Force of the divine Curse, *went out from the Presence of the Lord*, i. e. out of the Assembly, where the Lord appeared, and was worshiped, and never enjoyed the Blessings and Advantages, which attended the Assembly, any more.

C H A P. XV.

Of the SHECHINAH, and Divine APPEARANCES.

HAVING had Occasion, in the foregoing Chapter, to mention the *Shechinah*, (a rabinical Word from *שָׁכַן* to dwell,) which is used to signify a glorious Appearance, covered, or attended with a Cloud, denoting the extraordinary Presence of God, who is necessarily every where present ; this may be a proper Place to examine the Scripture upon the Point of divine Appearances. They are mentioned in both Parts of the

holy Scripture ; sometimes without taking any Notice of a visible Glory, and often expressly mentioning it ; as in the following Places. *Gen. xv. 17. The smoking Furnace and Lamp of Fire, שֶׁפָּרַח וְלָפִיד*, are justly supposed to correspond to the *Cloud and Pillar of Fire*, afterwards mentioned, as representing the divine Presence. Probably, in a visible Glory the Lord appeared to *Abraham*, *Gen. xvii. 1* ; and to *Isaac*, *Chap. xxvi. 2* ; and certainly to *Moses* in the Bush. *Exod. iii. 2*. The *Shechinah* was also in the Cloud and Pillar of Fire. *Exod. xiii. 21*. For it was the same Cloud that afterward rested upon the Tabernacle, when it was set up, and is called *the Cloud of the Lord*. *Exod. xl. 38*. *Numb. x. 34*. For *the Glory of the Lord* was within the Tabernacle upon the Mercy-Seat, as the Cloud was on the outside of it. *Exod. xl. 34, 35*. And it is there described, as in *Exod. xiii. 21*. that it appeared as a Cloud upon the Tabernacle by Day, and as a Fire by Night. *Exod. xl. 38. Numb. ix. 15, 16*.

THUS it conducted and guarded them in their Journeys, [and then alone was ordinarily seen by the whole Congregation] *Exod. xl. 36. Numb. ix. 17, 18, &c.* [*Isaiab* alludes to this *Chap. iv. 5, 6.*] And, as thus the Token of the divine Presence went before them, *the Lord* is said to go before them, and to lead them by this Cloud. And out
of

of this Cloud, or rather from the Glory of the Lord, within the Tabernacle, the Lord spake unto *Moses* what he spake and delivered in the Books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, and *Numbers*. Numb. vii. 89. *And when Moses went into the Tabernacle of the Congregation, to speak with him, [God,] then he heard the Voice of one speaking unto him from off the Mercy-Seat, that was upon the Ark of the Testimony, between the two Cherubims, and he spake unto him ; agreeably to what God had said, Exod. xxv. 22. I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-Seat, from between the two Cherubims, which are upon the Ark of the Testimony, of all things which I will give thee in Commandment unto the Children of Israel. And there, as upon a Throne, between the Cherubims, the Glory of the Lord had its Residence in the holy Place in Solomon's Temple, after it had taken Possession of the House, at the Consecration of it. 1 King. viii. 10, 11. [and there it continued till the Babylonish Captivity] Hence God is said to dwell between the Cherubims. 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. 2 King. xix. 15. Psalm. lxxx. 1, &c. The Glory of the Lord appeared to *Isaiah* in the Temple. *Isai.* vi. 1. and to *Ezekiel*, with many awful Circumstances. *Ezek.* i. 28. iii. 23. x. 4. xi. 23. xliii. 2, 4, 5. xliv. 4. The Glory of the Lord shone round about the Shepherds, and the Angel of the Lord*

came upon them, Luke ii. 8, 9. and to the three Disciples at the Transfiguration, Mat. xvii. 5. While he yet spake, behold, a bright Cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a Voice out of the Cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, &c. The Shechinah appeared to Saul, Acts ix. 3. Suddenly there shined round about him a Light from Heaven ; and to Peter in the Prison. Acts xii. 7.

THESE are the most remarkable divine Appearances mentioned in Scripture. Now the Question is, who, in such instances, was the Person that appeared and spake ? For Example, *Exod. iii. 14, it is written, And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM : and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. Who was it that spake to Moses ? Or what Notion are we to form of that Being, who pronounced those Words, I AM THAT I AM ? What makes the Enquiry necessary is this, that in the second Verse it is said, The ANGEL OF THE LORD appeared in a Flame of Fire out of the midst of a Bush. And yet it is said, concerning the same Person, Ver. 4. When THE LORD saw that he turned aside to see, GOD called to him out of the midst of the Bush. Ver. 6. Moreover he said, I am the GOD of thy Father, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, &c. And, Ver. 14. GOD said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. Ver. 15. GOD said unto Moses, Thus shalt*

shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, the LORD GOD of your Fathers hath sent me unto you. Now, most certain it is, that it was the ANGEL of the LORD that appeared to *Moses*. And certain it is, that the *Angel of the Lord*, that appeared to *Moses* in the Bush, did, out of the Bush, pronounce the several Sentences I have quoted. It was the *Angel of the Lord*, who said, *I am the GOD of thy Father ; I AM THAT I AM.* But the *Angel of the Lord God*, is not the *Lord God*, whose Angel he is. How then can it be said, that the *Lord God* appeared and spake to *Moses*? This is the Difficulty ; and the Solution is ready, and very clear.

THE solid and incontestible Foundation of the Solution is laid by our Lord himself, who perfectly understood the whole Affair of divine Appearances, in *John v. 37.* *And the Father himself, who hath sent me, hath born Witness of me. Ye have neither heard his Voice at any time, nor seen his Shape.* *John i. 18.* *No Man hath seen God at any time. He is the invisible God, whom no Man hath seen, or can see.* It is often said, that the Lord, the most high God, appeared to the Patriarchs, to *Moses*, and to the Prophets, the Ancestors of the *Jews* ; but, according to our Lord's Rule, the Appearance, Form, or Shape, which they saw, was not the Appearance of the Lord God himself, for never, at any time, did they see his Shape.

Shape. Again, it is often said, that the most High God *spake* to the Patriarchs, to *Moses*, and the Prophets ; but our Lord affirms, that they never heard his Voice at any time. How shall we reconcile this seeming Inconsistency ?

THE true Solution, according to the Scriptures, is this. That the Lord God never *spake* or appeared in Person, but always by a Proxy, *Nuncius*, or Messenger, who represented him, and therefore *spake* in his Name and Authority, saying, *I am God all-sufficient ; I am the God of Abraham ;* I AM THAT I AM. Which Words were pronounced by an Angel ; but are true, not of the Angel, but of God, whom he represented, and upon whose Errand he came. So a Herald reads a Proclamation in the King's Name and Words, as if the King himself were speaking. Or, to use a more common instance, so a Brief is published in the King's Name and Language, as if the King himself were addressing the Congregation where it is read. Thus, *GEORGE by the Grace of God, &c. whereas it hath been represented to US, &c. therefore they have humbly besought US to grant unto them OUR Letters Patent, &c. unto which their Request WE have graciously condescended, &c.* But much, surely, would he be mistaken, who should imagine, that the Person who reads the Proclamation, or the Brief, was his Majesty KING GEORGE, because

because he useth his Words, and speaks as if the King himself were speaking.

THAT this is a true Representation of the Case, will appear,

I. FROM the Signification of the Word ANGEL, [αγγελος מַלְאָךְ] which is a Greek Word, and both in that Language, and in the Hebrew, signifies a *Messenger*, or *Nuncius*, an *Ambassador*; one who acts and speaks, not in his own Name, or Behalf, but in the Name, Person, and Behalf of him that sends him. And thus the Word is frequently rendered in our Translation. And had it always been rendered the *Messenger of the Lord*, instead of the *Angel of the Lord*, the Case would have been very plain. But *Angel*, being a Greek Word, which the English Reader doth not understand, it throws some Obscurity upon such Passages.

II. IT is in Scripture expressly said, that it was an *Angel*, a *Nuncius*, or *Messenger* of the Lord, who spake, even when the Lord himself is said, or supposed to speak. As Gen. xvi. 7. *The Angel מַלְאָךְ found Hagar; and, Ver. 10, said unto her, I will multiply thy Seed exceedingly.* Gen. xviii. 1. *The Lord appeared unto Abraham, Ver. 2. And he lifted up his Eyes, and lo, three Men, three Angels in the Shape of Men, stood by him.* Now one of those Men, or Angels, was a *Nuncius* sent particularly to *Abraham*; for
Ver.

Ver. 10, he said, as he was sitting at Meat, I will certainly return unto thee ; and lo, Sarah shall have a Son. And Sarah heard it, Ver. 12, and laughed. Ver. 13. And the Lord, i. e. the Angel who spake in the Lord, said, wherefore did Sarah laugh? Ver. 14. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return unto thee, and Sarah shall have a Son. Again, Gen. xxii. 15. And the Angel, or Messenger, of the Lord called unto Abraham out of Heaven, Ver. 16, and said, by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, &c. Upon which Place St. AUSTIN, quoted by Bp. PATRICK in his Commentary upon the Place, argues in this Manner.

“ IN the Beginning of this Chapter, *Ver.*
 “ 1, 2, we read, that GOD *tempted* [tried]
 “ *Abraham*, and bad him go, and offer up
 “ his Son *Isaac* ; but, *Ver. 11, 12, the An-*
 “ *gel of the Lord called unto him out of*
 “ *Heaven, and said, Lay not thy Hands upon*
 “ *the Lad.* What is the Meaning of this ?
 “ Will they say, that God commanded *Isaac*
 “ to be slain, and that his *Angel* forbad
 “ it ? And that *Abraham* obeyed the An-
 “ gel, who bid him spare his Son, against
 “ God, who ordered him to slay him ? This
 “ is ridiculous, and not to be endured. The
 “ plain Meaning is, that God spake both
 “ times, in the one Case, and the other ;
 “ but he spake by an Angel, who was his
 “ Minister.

“ Minister. That is the Reason, Angels
 “ sometimes speak as if they were the Lord,
 “ because they spake in the Lord’s Name.
 “ Just as when a public Crier in a Court
 “ pronounces the Sentence of the Judge,
 “ it is not entered in the public Records,
 “ that the Crier pronounced that Sentence,
 “ but the Judge, in whose Name and Au-
 “ thority the Crier pronounced it.” Thus
 St. AUSTIN. — In *Exodus* iii. 2. the Angel,
Nuncius, or Messenger of the Lord appeared
 unto *Moses* ; and said, *I am the God of Abra-*
ham ; I AM THAT I AM ; speaking not of
 himself, but of the Lord whose Messenger
 he was. — *Joshua* vi. 2. *The Lord said*
unto Joshua. It appears from *Chap.* v. 13,
 14. that it was not the Lord who spake,
 but an Angel, under the Title of *the Cap-*
tain of the Lord’s Host.

FURTHER, it is evident from every Part
 of the Law of *Moses*, that it was given and
 ordained by God, the LORD, the most high
 God ; and in his Name it is every where
 worded and enjoined, *Exod.* xx. 1, 2. *And*
God spake all these Words, saying, I am the
Lord thy God. And the Lord said unto Moses.
And Moses said unto the Lord. And yet it
 appears from repeated Testimonies in the
 New Testament, that it was not the Lord,
 who immediately himself spake, either to
Moses, or to all the People. Thus *Stephen,*
a Man full of Faith, and of the holy Ghost.

Acts

Acts vii. 35. *This Moses, whom they refused, — did God send to be a Ruler, and a Deliver by the Hands of the Angel, or Messenger, who appeared to him in the Bush ; and who is called the Angel of his, God's, Presence.* Isai. lxiii 9. Ver. 28. *This [Moses] is he that was in the Church in the Wilderness, with the Angel who spake to him in Mount Sinai.* [Note — it was an Angel, a Messenger, that spake to Moses in Mount Sinai.] Ver. 53. — *who have received the Law by the Disposition, in the Constitutions published by the Ministry, of Angels.* Gal. iii. 19. *Wherefore then serveth the Law of Moses ? It was added because of Transgressions, till the Seed should come, to whom the Promise was made ; and it, the Law, was ordained by the Ministry of Angels.* Heb. ii. 2. *For if the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast,* meaning the Law given by Moses. That Law was spoken to him, and to all the People, by Angels, who spake, not of themselves, but what was communicated to them from God.

III. THE *Jews* very well understood the Nature of those Manifestations. They knew when a miraculous Voice came to them, speaking as God himself would speak, that it was a Messenger from God, who spake in his Name and Stead, Gen. xvi. 7, 9. The Angel of the Lord appeared and spake to *Hagar* ; yet she knew it was a divine Appearance,

pearance, and that the Angel personated the most high God. Therefore, *Ver. 13. she called the Name of the LORD, that spake unto her, Thou GOD seeſt me. — Gen. xxxii. 24. There wrestled a Man with Jacob.* Now Jacob knew that Man was a Messenger from God ; and therefore, *Ver. 30. he called the Name of the Place Peniel ; for I have ſeen GOD Face to Face, i. e. I have ſeen an evident Manifeſtation from God. — The common Token, that ſuch were divine Manifeſtations, was the Glory which attended the Messenger, who pronounced the Words of the Meſſage. And whenever that Glory appeared, the Jews knew the Meſſage came from God, whoever it was that brought it. Thus Luke ii. 9. The Angel of the Lord came upon the Shepherds, and the Glory of the Lord ſhone round about them. They knew the Glory they ſaw was not the Glory of the Angel, but a Token of the divine Preſence and Authority, ſignifying that the Meſſage came from the Lord. Therefore they ſay, Ver. 15. Let us now go — and ſee this thing, which the LORD hath made known unto us. And ſo Saul knew the Light ſhining from Heaven, was the Glory of the Lord, and an infallible Proof of a divine Manifeſtation. And, 2 Pet. i. 17. He, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, received from God the Father, Honor and Glory, when there came ſuch a Voice unto him from the excellent Glory,*
this

this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Whoever the Messenger was that uttered these Words, the Disciples, that saw the Transfiguration on the Mount, knew that the thing came from God the Father ; because *the Voice, or Words, came from the excellent Glory, or the Shechinah.*

IT is very remarkable, that when our Lord was exalted to universal Dominion, at the Right-Hand of God, as Head of the Church, he also had his ANGEL, *Nuncius*, or Messenger, whom he dispatched upon the Affairs of his Government. *Rev. i. 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which GOD gave unto him, to shew unto his Servants things which must shortly come to pass ; and he, Jesus, sent and signified it by his ANGEL unto his Servant John.* And therefore, though the glorious Appearance, *Rev. i. 13—17.* is rightly understood of our Lord, yet it was not he in Person, but his ANGEL, *Nuncius*, or Messenger, who represented him, and appeared and spake in his Name. And so in other Places of the *Revelation* ; where, nevertheless, our Lord may justly be supposed to appear and speak.

WE may here observe, that it hath been commonly supposed, that our Lord, before his Incarnation, was the ANGEL that appeared in the *Shechinah*, and spake to *Adam* and the Patriarchs, to *Moses* and the Prophets, and is called *the Angel of his Presence*, *Isai. lxiii. 9.*

In

In all their Affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them ; in his Love and in his Pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the Days of old. To this Purpose they understand, John xii. 41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his Glory and spake of him, i. e. " saw, at that time, the Glory of Christ, " who was then the Medium of Divine " Manifestations, and spake of him, and of " his times, or what would happen with " respect to the Reception of the Gospel, " when he should preach it to the Jews."

[Dr. Dodderidge.] But, *when he saw his Glory,* may be well interpreted, " when he [Esaias] " foresaw his Glory, or the glorious Ma- " nifestations, which God intended to make " of himself to the Jews by his Son."

[Dr. Clarke.] So *John viii. 56. Abraham saw, foresaw, my Day, and was glad.* Thus also, as he tabernacled among the Jews in the Cloud of Glory, they judge *he was in the Form of God, Phil. ii. 9 ;* which Form, or Likeness, he was not greedy of retaining, *but emptied himself of it, and took upon him the Form of a Servant.* But this Form, or Likeness of God, may refer to *the Glory which he had with the Father before the World was, John xvii. 5.* With regard to which he may also be said to be *the Image of God, 2 Cor. iv. 4. — the Image of the invisible God, Col. i. 15. — the Brightness of his*

Glory, and the express Image of his Person, Heb. i. 3. However, I should willingly admit that such Expressions refer to the glorious Appearances of the *Shechinah* under the Old Testament, were it not for this Objection, that our Lord must then be supposed to publish the Law, and to preside over the Jewish Dispensation, as well as over the Gospel; which seems to be quite inconsistent with *John* i. 17. *The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.* See also *Heb.* i. 1, 2. ii. 2. [Here the Apostle's Argument proceeds wholly upon the difference of the Persons, the *Angels*, who published the Law, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who published the Gospel; but his Argument hath no Strength at all, if those Persons are the same *. See Mr.

* BUT may we not distinguish between the *λογος* as a Proxy of Deity, or as personating the glorious Majesty of God in the *Shechinah*, and in that Capacity, by the Holy Spirit, inspiring the Prophets, and presiding over the Angels at the giving of the Law; and the same *λογος* acting and speaking to us, in his incarnate State, in the Capacity of a Prophet? In the former Capacity he may be considered in Relation to God, as personating God, or as in the Form of God, whose Agent he was under every Dispensation which God erected; and therefore as doing nothing in his own Person. For thus, his Person would coincide with that of the supreme God, and is not to be considered as different from him, but as acting in his Name and Authority. In the latter Capacity he may be considered in Relation to us, and to our Salvation by the Gospel; for the Accomplish-
ment

Mr. Pierce upon the Text.] *Heb.* iii. 1—3.
[Here *Moses's* House, and *Christ's* House, or
Dispensation, are clearly distinguished.]

M 2 BUT

ment of which, he stooped so far as to take upon him our Nature, and, not as personating God, but in Quality of a Prophet sent from God, to publish among us in his own Person, and Name, the Promise of eternal Life.

AND must not this bring us under greater Obligations to attend to him ; and be sufficient to distinguish him as acting in delivering the Law, and preaching the Gospel ? He that was in the Form of God, and represented God, when the Law was delivered, and who delivered it by the Ministry of Angels and of *Moses* ; that transcendently glorious Person afterwards became a Man, and in his own Person, and by his own Ministry, delivered to us the Gospel. Doth not this, in a very peculiar Manner, recommend to us the Gospel, and oblige us to attend to its Doctrines ? *Heb.* i. 1, 2. *God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers BY THE PROPHETS, hath in these last Days spoken unto us BY HIS SON, &c.* God always spake by Proxy. And the Apostle might speak as he doth, although it be true, that our Lord was the Proxy of Deity under the Old Testament Dispensation. For the Apostle here considers, not who was the Proxy of Deity, but by whom he immediately spake to the Fathers in the Jewish Church, and to us in the Christian Church. And the Opposition lieth between, not the Proxies or Representatives of Deity, but between THE PROPHETS in the former Dispensation, and THE SON OF GOD in the latter. By his Son, as his Proxy, he spake to the Prophets, and by the Prophets he spake to the Old Testament Fathers. But under the New Testament his well beloved Son, who before was indeed in the Form of God, as his Proxy, himself became a Prophet, and in the Form of a Man spake to us immediately as a Prophet.

BUT supposing our Lord was the Angel, who appeared and spake under the Old Testament, yet it must be remembered, that he appeared and spake only as an *Angel*, or *Nuncius* from God. Which Character he expressly sustains, *Mal. iii. 1.*—and *הַאֲרִיז* the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple; even *הַבִּרִית מְלֹאךְ* the Messenger, Angel, of the Covenant, [not the Sinai, but the Gospel Covenant,] whom ye delight in.

C H A P. XVI.

Of the GLORY OF THE LORD, as it hath relation to the SHECHINAH, or Divine APPEARANCES.

IT is deserving of our further Observation, that the *Shechinah*, or divine Appearances, as a Token of God's Presence, and of his Guidance, Encouragement, and Protection of his People, is often mentioned in the old Testament under the Character of THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH. As in *Exodus xvi. 7, 10. xxiv. 16. Lev. ix. 6, 23. Num. xiv. 10, 21, 22. xvi. 19. xx. 6. Hebrew ix. 5.*—the *Cherubim of the glory*, i. e. the Glory of Jehovah, dwelling between the Cherubim, over the Mercy-seat. St. Peter alludes to this, *2 Epist. i. 17.*—*there came a Voice from the excellent Glory.* This Token of God's Presence

sence is otherwise called his *Presence*, Exodus xxxiii. 14. and his *Name*, as that signifieth a Mark of Distinction or Eminence. Deut. xii. 5. 2 Chron. vii. 16.

CERTAINLY it was the peculiar Honor and Advantage of the *Israelites*, that they had such a public visible Manifestation of the Presence and Favor of God ; [Rom. ix. 4. *Who are Israelites ; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the Glory, or the glorious Manifestations of God.*] And was well adapted to that Dispensation of the Church ; especially in the early times of its Institution under *Moses*, when they could not, by abstract Reasoning, be so well acquainted with the Nature and Perfections of God ; and therefore stood in need of some extraordinary visible Token, to strike and affect their Minds with a Sense of his Presence, Power, Authority, Favor and Protection.

AND as the *Glory of the Lord* appeared publicly in Favor of the *Israelites*, to guard and guide them, when they left the Land of *Egypt* ; so the *Glory of the Lord* is used figuratively to denote, in general, his special Blessing, Favor, Presence, and Protection, upon any Occasion. *Isaiah* lviii. 8. *Is it not to deal thy Bread to the Hungry, &c. Then shall thy Light, Prosperity, break forth as the Morning, and thy Health shall spring forth speedily : and thy Righteousness, [Salvation, Saviour] shall go before thee,* THE GLO-

RY OF JEHOVAH *shall be thy Rereward, shall advance in thy Rear, or behind thee, to guard thee ; alluding to the Shechinah as it guarded and guided the Children of Israel. Isa. lx. 1. Arise, shine ; for thy Light, Happiness, is come, and THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH is risen upon thee.* Thus it is figuratively to denote the divine Favor and Guardianship.

AND in the same Manner it is applied to the Christian Church, as denoting all the Light and Blessings, Grace, and Glory of the Gospel. *Num. xiv. 21. But as truly as I live, all the Earth shall be filled with MY GLORY ; speaking of the Gospel, in Contradiction to the Jewish Peculiarity. Isa. xxxv. 1, 2. The Wilderness of the solitary Place shall be glad for them ; and the Desert shall rejoice and blossom as the Rose, &c. They shall see THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH, and the Excellency of our God. Isai. xl. 3, 4, 5. The Voice of him that crieth in the Wilderness, prepare ye the Way of the Lord ; make straight in the Desert a high way for our God. Every Valley shall be exalted, &c. And THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, [וְכָל בְּשָׂרָה] completely, or in it's Perfection.] for the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Hab. ii. 14. For the Earth shall be filled with the Knowledge of the GLORY OF GOD, as the Waters cover the Sea.*

ALL

ALL these Passages are to be understood of the Gospel Manifestations of God's Grace, which is his Glory. *Exodus xxxiii. 18, 19. And Moses said, I beseech thee, shew me thy Glory. And he said, I will make all my Goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of Jehovah before thee; namely, as in Chap. xxxiv. 6, 7, The Lord—proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God merciful, and gracious, &c.* The Goodness and Mercy of the Lord is *the Glory of the Lord.*

AND observe, how the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 13—18. alludes to the Glory of the *Shechinah*, with which *Moses* conversed in the Mount; and which impressed such a Splendor upon his Countenance, as obliged him to cover it with a Veil, when he returned to the People; who otherwise could not bear to look upon the excessive Brightness of the Glory of God, reflected from his, *Moses's* Face. In allusion to this Veil, obscuring the Brightness of *Moses* his Countenance, the Apostle informs us, Ver. 14, 15. that there was an Obscurity, a Veil over his Writings; which Veil, after *Christ* was come, and had taken it away, from the Old Testament, the *Jews*, through unbelief, transferred to their own Hearts, and so remained ignorant of the true Meaning of *Moses* and the Prophets. But, Ver. 18. *we all*, [all we Christians, in Opposition to the blinded *Jews*. Ver. 13, 14.] *we all with open,*

unveiled, Face, having *the GLORY of the LORD, reflected upon us* [from the Face of Jesus, Chap. 4, 6.] *as from a Mirror, are, in the Dispositions of our Minds, changed into the same Image of moral Excellency, from Glory to Glory, or in order to the most compleat Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* John i. 14. *The Word was made Flesh, and ἐσκηνωσεν dwelt, tabernacled, among us; and we, as well as his first Disciples, beheld the Glory of Jesus Christ, as of the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace and Truth.* The Son of God became a Man subject to like Frailties with us, and lived and conversed freely amongst Men; teaching them fully and plainly the great Truths relating to God's gracious Purposes concerning the Redemption and eternal Salvation of Mankind. And thus God, and his merciful Regards to Men, his Presence in his Church, and his Power, ingaged to keep his Servants, and to bring them to the Possession of eternal Life, is more clearly and illustriously manifested in the Gospel, than his favorable Presence and Protection were by the *Shechinah* in the Temple, or in any other Place, among the *Israelites*.

WE, who under the Gospel Dispensation, are so well acquainted with the Nature and Perfections of God, do not stand in need of any extraordinary visible Token of the Divine Presence. The glorious Truths of the Gospel,

Gospel, revealed by *Jesus Christ*, are our *Shechinah*, shining from him upon our Minds, and filling them with Comfort and Joy, in the assured Hope of his present Care and Blessing, and of the Possession of Glory, Honor and Immortality in the future World. And this is to us a *Shechinah*, infinitely preferable to the visible Appearances in the Church of Old.

C H A P. XVII.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the*
CREATION *to the* DELUGE.

Gen. 5th Chapter.

WE are now got as far as the Deluge. And here, according to *Moses*, who here begins his Genealogies, is the proper Place for considering how far we are advanced in the Age, or Chronology, of the World. For in this Chapter he gives the Names and Ages of the Patriarchs from *Adam* to *Noah*, together with the Age of every Father, at the time when every Son was born. And if we add together the Ages of the Fathers, when their several Sons were born, and the Years of *Noah's* Life at the Time of the Deluge, we shall form Chronological Tables of the best Authority, from the Creation to the Deluge, after this Manner.

Years

from the CREATION to the DELUGE. 171

Adam. In the same Way of Computation you may find how long any of the junior Patriarchs lived with *Adam* as in Table IV.

IF to the Year of *Enos's* Life, when *Cainan* was born, and to the Year of *Lamech's* Life, when *Noah* was born, you add all the intermediate Years, you will find they are 821, which is the Age of *Enos* when *Noah* was born: but *Enos* lived 905 Years; from which subtract 821, and the remainder is 84. the Number of Years in which old *Enos* and young *Noah* were Contemporaries. And in the same Way you may find how long any of the senior, preceding Patriarchs, lived with *Noah*, as in Table V.

So likewise if you add together the Years from the Birth of *Methuselah* to the Flood, you will find them to be 969; which is just the Time that *Methuselah* lived, as in Table III. Hence we may conclude, that *Methuselah* died just before the Flood came; and *Noah* being then 600 Years old, he had lived just so long with *Methuselah*.

So again, if you add the Years from the Birth of *Lamech* to the Flood, you will find them to be 782 Years; and whereas *Lamech* lived but 777 Years, it follows, that *Lamech* died five Years before the Flood came. Therefore, all the Patriarchs, except *Noah*, were dead, when *Noah* entered into the Ark.

FROM

FROM the above Account it appears, that *Methuselah* lived with *Adam* 243 Years, and doubtless conversed with him the greatest Part of that time; and so, had Opportunity abundantly sufficient to receive from *Adam* an Account of what he knew concerning the Creation, and all the Transactions and Events contained in the first four Chapters of *Genesis*. And as *Noah* lived 600 Years with *Methuselah*, he had time sufficient to learn the same Account from him, and may well be supposed to have carried it with him intire into the Ark. And this may be one Reason of the Longevity of the Antediluvians; which must be resolved into the sole Will of God, and can be accounted for no other Way. They lived so long, in order to preserve, and hand down to Posterity, religious Knowledge, in that Period of time when it could not be committed to Writing; and when it would have been either totally lost, or miserably depraved, had Men lived no longer than 70 or 80 Years. Besides, their Longevity contributed to the more speedy peopling of the World, and to the bringing of necessary Arts, in Tillage, Building and Clothing, to a greater Perfection.

Ver. 1. *זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדֹת אָדָם* *This is the Book of the Generations of Adam*, that is to say, this is the Pedegree, or the Genealogy of the Descendants of *Adam*. So *Mat. i. 1.*

The

from the CREATION to the DELUGE. 173
The Book of the Generation, is the Genealogy
of *Jesus Christ*.

Ver. 3. As we know that *Adam* had both *Cain* and *Abel* before *Seth* was born, so both he, and the other Patriarchs, might have several other Children before those that are named in this List; it being, probably, the Design of *Moses* to set down only those Persons, by whom the Line of *Noah* was drawn from *Seth*, by their true Ancestors, whether they were the eldest of the Family, or not.

Ver. 21.—and begat *Methuselah*. It is the ingenious Conjecture of *Ainsworth*, that מתושלה is a Word compounded of טת *he dieth*, and ושלח for ומשלח and an Emission; as much as to say, *When he dieth, there shall be an Emission, or Inundation, of Waters*. Thus *Enoch* may be supposed to have predicted the Deluge in the Name, which he gave his Son *Methuselah*, with this particular Circumstance, that the Deluge should happen in the Year, in which his Son should die; as it certainly did. However we have the Authority of an Apostle, that *Enoch* was a Prophet, and did foresee, and foretel the Deluge to that Generation of Men. *Jude* ver. 14, 15. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, or of such Men as these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints, or with Myriads of his holy Angels, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are*
ungodly

ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard, unreasonable, contumacious, blasphemous Speeches, which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him. This, I apprehend, in its primary Intention, is a Prediction of the Deluge, by which God would punish that impious Race, which then inhabited the Earth. But as their Destruction by the Deluge is made an Example of the Vengeance which God will execute upon all impenitently Wicked at the last Day, (2 *Pet.* ii. 5.) so *Enoch's* Prophecy will suit the Wicked of all Ages, who shall certainly meet with a like Reward of their Deeds.

Ver. 22. וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ עִנּוֹךְ אִתָּהּ *And Enoch walked diligently with, or unto, God, and in a Manner agreeable and pleasing to God.* And so did *Noah*, Chap. vi. 9. In this Construction (with אִתָּהּ) וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ is used but once more, 1 *Sam.* xxv, 15; and there it implies Friendship and Benevolence on the Part of those they conversed with. Therefore the Apostle rightly inserts the Idea of *pleasing God* in the Account he gives of *Enoch's* Translation, *Heb.* xi. 5, 6; and argues well, that *Enoch's* pleasing God, was the Effect of his Faith in God, and in a future Reward. *For without Faith it is impossible to please God, or to walk with, or to come unto him, as Enoch did. For he that cometh unto God, must, in the very nature of*

of

of the thing, *believe that he is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* [Observe — *pleasing God, coming unto God, and diligently seeking him*, are synonymous, and all included in the Sense of *walking with God.*] By Faith *Enoch* lead a very religious and heavenly Life. His Thoughts and Affections were removed from things below, and fixed upon things above. He had a deep Sense of God and his Perfections, delighted in his Ways, behaved as always in his Sight, and constantly studied to please him, and promote his Glory. Being of a Character so excellent, and withal a Person of eminent Note, and great Industry in opposing the growing Wickedness of the World, God was pleased to reward his Piety, and give the rest of Mankind a Demonstration of a future State of Glory, the Inheritance of the holy and virtuous, by translating him alive, without seeing Death, into Heaven. It is not improbable, that he was translated in some visible Manner as *Elijah* was afterwards, by a glorious Appearance of the *Shechinah*, from whence some heavenly Ministers might be detached to convey him to a better World. This happened 57 Years after *Adam's* Death, in the Year of the World 987, and 669 Years before the Deluge.

Ver. 29. *And Lamech called his Son's Name Noah*, [Rest or Refreshment, from נוח to rest, to take Repose,] *saying, This same shall comfort*

comfort us concerning our Work, and Toil of our Hands, because of the Ground, which the Lord hath cursed. Lamech might give his Son this Name when he found he had an extraordinary Genius for Agriculture, and was likely by his useful Inventions, to diminish the very great Toil, which had hitherto attended the Tillage of the Earth. See Chap. ix. 20, 21.

C H A P. XVIII.

Of the D E L U G E.

Gen. Chapters VI. and VII.

GEN. iv. 26.—*then it was begun to call by the Name of the Lord.* Or then, in the Days of *Enos*, the Family of *Seth*, which adhered to God and his Worship, began to give themselves a Denomination expressive of their Relation and Regards to God; that is to say, to assume the Title of *the Sons*, or *Children of God*, as in Chap. vi. 2. in order to distinguish and separate themselves from the irreligious Family of *Cain*. Which Title was also used after the Flood. *Job i. 6. ii. 1.*

BUT (Chap. vi. 1. which is in Connection with Chap. iv. 26, the intermediate Chapter being a genealogical Parenthesis)

[*But*

[*But when men began to multiply on the face of the Earth, and Daughters were born unto them, &c.*] The Families of *Seth* and *Cain*, increasing and spreading upon the Earth, at length met and unhappily mixed together. For the Sons of God, by the Instigation of sensual Appetite, without Regard to Reason or Religion, joined themselves in Affinity to *Cain's* impious Posterity, by marrying their beautiful Women. The Consequence of which was, that they were soon corrupted by the prophane Conversation of their new Relations. The virtuous and godly in marrying both themselves, and Children, should be careful to keep within the Limits of Religion. A Wife is the Foundation of many other Relations, and commonly has a great Influence upon a Man and his Family. But it is a Relation we can chuse for ourselves. And in a Case of so great Importance, we should neither follow the Lust of Covetousness, nor of carnal Desires, but the Rules of Religion, and the Fear of God.

THUS, notwithstanding the divine Manifestations, and the Preaching of *Enoch* and *Noah*, and, probably, of other good Men, the Contagion of Wickedness by Degrees infected the whole Earth, and turned it into a Scene of Impiety, Lewdness, and Injustice. The Issue, of the aforesaid disorderly Marriages, joined the worst Part; and growing up without any Sense of Religion and

Virtue, became wholly ingaged in sensual ambitious Pursuits, and joining, or imitating a lewd and impious Race of Giants, which were then in the Earth, they affected to be Men of Renown for great and valorous Exploits, by all Methods of Oppression and Violence, subjecting all others to their Wills and Lusts; and every where extinguishing a Sense of God, both by their wicked, *ungodly Deeds*, and *their hard*, contumacious, blasphemous *Speeches* against him, and his holy Laws, (*Jude 15.*) despising his Goodness, and disdaining the Restraints of his Government; till *all the Earth was corrupt before God, and filled with Violence*, Ver. 13. *every Imagination of the Thoughts of their Hearts being only evil continually*, Ver. 5; which cut off all hopes of their Amendment, their Minds being wholly intent upon gratifying their Ambition and Lust.

IN Relation to this sad Condition of the World, the first thing that God declared, probably, from the *Shechinah* in the thin Assembly of his Worshipers, was this, (Ver. 3.) *My Spirit shall not always strive with Man, &c.* This is the Spirit (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.) *by which our Lord went and preached* [not in Person, but by such Preachers as *Enoch* and *Noah*, 2 Pet. ii. 5.] *unto the Spirits* [which are now, i. e. at the time of the Apostle's writing] *in Prison*, [confined in the State of the Dead, and reserved in safe Custody

today to the Day of Judgment,] *which sometimes were disobedient in the Days of Noah, while the Ark was in preparing. My Spirit shall not always strive, or debate, with Man,* for his Reformation, **בִּשְׂרָ בָשָׂר הוּא** *eo quod profecto ille caro, seeing that really he is [nothing but] flesh, altogether fleshly, void of all virtuous Principles, and therefore incapable of being reformed by any Means proper to be applied to a rational Nature. Violence, or Coaction cannot make him good, and he will not attend to any Methods of Persuasion. But where the Reformation of moral Agents cannot be effected, it is fit and reasonable that they should be destroyed; for it is to no Purpose to continue in being a Race of Creatures, who live in direct Opposition to the Perfections of God, and all the wise and good Ends of their Creation; and who therefore might as well never have been made at all; because rendered utterly incapable of honouring God their Maker, of injoying themselves, or being useful to others. It must be inconsistent with the divine Perfections, and all the good and wise Ends of his Government, to make that Life the Object of his providential Care and Liberality, which is thus miserably perverted. On the contrary, such are the Nuisance, Corruption, Disorder, and Plague of the Creation; and for that Reason it is agreeable, not only to Justice, but to Goodness, and Beneficence that*

such should be removed out of the Creation. Hence it is, that God speaking בְּנִי אָדָם עַל-דְּבַרְתָּ after the Manner of Men, is said *to repent; and to be grieved, that he had made Man on the Earth*, and was resolved to destroy them. Ver. 6, 7.

COROLLARY. I. Religion and Virtue are the Soul and Support of the Universe; which being totally taken away, no Reason can be given why any Worlds or Agents should exist.

COROLLARY. II. The holy Scriptures, which assure us the Wages of Sin is Death, and constantly affirm, that the impenitent Workers of Iniquity shall be destroyed, do give us infallibly a just and true Account of things, which demands the whole Attention of our Minds.

IT was determined, because it was fit, that the World so vicious should be destroyed. And the great God might destroy them in what Way he should judge most proper, without any Injustice on his Part, or on the Part of any Agents which he might employ. He might have destroyed them by Fire from Heaven, as *Sodom*, &c. Or by Pestilence, or by destroying Angels, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 12, 27. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 21. Or he might have given a Commission to any one more righteous Nation among them, had there been any such, to destroy all the rest by the Sword, and a Right to enter upon all their Possessions,

Possessions, as in the Case of the wicked *Canaanites*, *Deut.* vii. 2. ix. 5. *Lev.* xviii. 26, &c. For the Property of Life, and of all Possessions, belongs originally and absolutely to God alone. But he chose to destroy them by a Deluge, or general Inundation.

NOT that the divine Wisdom intended to extirpate the human Race; the Design was not to extirpate, but to reform; and therefore the Lord was graciously pleased to respite the Judgment, the impious World had deserved, for 120 Years, *Ver.* 3. This was to shew that he had no Pleasure in their Destruction, and to give them Space for Repentance, that their Ruin, if possible, might be prevented. Thus *the long-suffering of God waited for the Conversion of the disobedient in the Days of Noah, while the Ark was preparing*, 1 *Pet.* iii. 20. *Noah* was an excellent Person, *a just Man and perfect*, who, like *Enoch*, *walked with God*, *Ver.* 9. Him and his Family God was pleased graciously to preserve; that from so good a Stock the human Race might be again propagated, and Religion restored in the World. With him God purposed to *establish his Covenant*, or Grant of Blessings, *Ver.* 18. The Grace of God to Mankind, especially the grand Scheme of Redemption, was not to fail, or to be suspended; therefore the Lord directed *Noah* to build a Vessel in shape like a large Chest, every Way convenient for floating up-

on the Waters, and for containing all the Creatures, which it was to receive, Verse 20. * [See PIERCE on *Heb. xi. 7.*] *Noah* without Delay expressed his humble and entire Faith in the divine Warning; and in Obedience to it, applied himself to the building of the Ark, for the saving of himself and Family, (*Heb. xi. 7.*) *by the which he condemned the unbelieving and impenitent World, and became heir of the Righteousness, [or became intitled to the Salvation] which is by Faith.*

NOTE—*Noah* is commonly, and I think, justly supposed to have been 120 Years in building the Ark, for that was the time *the long-suffering* of God waited; which time of long-suffering was, *while the Ark was in preparing*, as in 1 Pet. iii. 20. At the Beginning of this time, *Noah's* three Sons, *Shem, Ham* and *Japhet*, were not born; for *Noah* was now but 480 Years old, and none of his foresaid Sons were born till he was 500. Chap. v. 32. And therefore that Paragraph, Verse 17, &c. wherein mention is made of *Noah's* Sons, *Shem, Ham* and *Japhet*, and their Wives, must have been spoken after the Ark was finished.

WHEN

	Cubits.	Feet.	Yards.
* <i>The Length of the Ark</i>	300 equal to	450 equal to	150 at least.
<i>The Breadth</i> ———	50	75	25.
<i>The Height</i> ———	30	45	15.

WHEN the Ark was finished, and *Noah* and his Family, the Animals and their Food, safe lodged in it, about the 6th of November, in the Year of the World 1656, by the mighty Power of God, *the Fountains of the great Deep*s were broken up, Chap. vii. 11. the Sea overflowed, being prodigiously raised by the violent Eruption of the subterraneous Waters; and Rain came down from the Skie, not in Drops, but in Streams and Spouts, *the Windows of Heaven* were opened; and both together easily prevailed over the Earth, and put it out of the Power of the wisest and strongest of Men to relieve either themselves or their Friends.

AND now, how were the careless and impenitent Unbelievers surprized! Conceive them securely going on in the usual Way of Life, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in Marriage, *Mat.* xxiv. 37; feasting and reveling, thinking of nothing but sensual Enjoyments, in contempt of every serious Admonition. When all on a sudden the most terrible Rains and Inundations threatened their inevitable Destruction. How would they be terrified! How would they condemn their own Unbelief, and be forced to own there was a just and righteous God, who will execute Vengeance on all the incurable Workers of Iniquity! This is a Specimen of the final Destruction of the Ungodly at the last Day, which God hath re-

vealed. Let us not harden our Hearts, but believe and prepare.

Chap. vi. 17. *AND behold I, even I, by my own immediate Operation, do bring המבול a Flood of Waters upon the Earth, to destroy all Flesh.* The Word מבול in its primary Sense, doth not include the Idea of a Flood; it comes from נבל which, with Relation to Plants and Animals, originally signifies, to be so exhausted of natural Moisture and Spirits, in which their Life consists, as to be withered, or dead. And it is applied peculiarly to the Deluge, and to nothing but that, under the Notion of Extinction of Life; and so the Phrase המבול מים may be translated, *an Extinction of Life by Waters.* It is only used in Gen. Chapters the 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th; and in Psal. xxix. 10. *The Lord siteth [ישב] fat, or did sit] upon, or at, the Flood, the Extinction of Life at the Deluge. He then sat upon the Seat of Judgment executing Vengeance upon that wicked Generation; yea, the Lord siteth King for ever.* AINSWORTH upon Psal. xxix. 10.

THIS Dispensation, as all the rest, had relation to the Morals of Mankind; and the evident Design of it was to lessen the Quantity of Vice and Profaneness, and to preserve and advance Religion and Virtue in the Earth, the great End for which the Earth, and Man in it, were created. This End it was well adapted to obtain in the then present State of things, and in all future Generations. In the present

present State of things, it prevented a total Corruption. For if the whole tainted Part had not been cut off, a single Family would soon have been drawn in, or destroyed ; and then the whole Globe must have been ruined, and the Schemes and Purposes of God from the Beginning of the World, had been defeated. But by reserving a select Family for the Continuation of the human Species, the System of the divine Counsels were preserved intire, and the most proper Method was devised for the Establishment of Religion and Virtue in the new World ; as the Family of *Noah* enjoyed much greater Advantages for this End, than the Family of *Adam* at the Beginning of things.

NOAH was not, like *Adam*, a new, unexperienced Being, ignorant of every thing, but what he received from Revelation. *Noah*, besides the Benefit of Revelation, and Intercourse with Heaven, had the whole Compass of ancient antediluvian Knowledge from the Creation, in his own Possession. He was a Man of the most eminent Abilities, and the most steady Integrity. *Adam* was easily seduced ; but in the midst of an universal Degeneracy, *Noah* firmly adhered to Truth and Religion ; and when he was warned of God to prepare the Ark, even 120 Years before the Deluge, or any Appearances of it, so strong was his Faith, or Persuasion of the divine Power, Justice, and Veracity, that he applied himself to the
Work,

Work, and compleated it, surrounded as he was with the Infidelity and Contempt of all the World. A Man of so much Understanding, and of such a Spirit, would not fail to communicate all he knew to his Posterity, nor to inculcate it strongly upon their Hearts.

BUT his Family, *Shem, Ham, and Japhet*, with their Wives, were Eye-Witnesses of the dreadful Inundation, and had the most affecting Proof of their own Deliverance. They resided full twelve Months in the Ark, from the Beginning of the Deluge, to the End of it. And it is easy to conceive how they would be affected in such a moving Situation. They knew this shocking Catastrophe was not an unfortunate Accident, but occasioned by the Wickedness of the World; therefore all the Terrors of the Deluge must give them the most sensible Perception of the malignant Nature of Wickedness, that it is infinitely odious to God, and dreadfully pernicious to Sinners. They must be convinced of the uncontrollable Power and Dominion of the most High, the Impossibility of escaping his Vengeance, what a fearful thing it is to fall into his Hands, and how much they were obliged, both in Interest and Duty, to reverence and obey him.

ON the other Hand, their Preservation from so terrible a Calamity, in the midst of the Ruins of all the World besides, must be

a very

a very striking Demonstration of God's Favor and Compassion to themselves; which was naturally adapted to make the deepest Impressions of Gratitude, Love, and Duty. Especially as they could not but be sensible, that such a great and miraculous Deliverance was particularly owing to the eminent Piety of their Father, *Gen. vii. 1.* Thus they would be well prepared and disposed to acknowledge and admit the Excellency of those Principles and Practices which had been, through divine Goodness, their Security in the general Desolation.

AND when they left the Ark, all the dismal Appearances of the desolate World, the Ruins of Palaces, Towns, and Cities, the sadly changed Face of Countries, which they had seen in a cultivated, flourishing State, the Bones of Men and other Animals, strewed over all the Face of the Earth, would have a natural Tendency to fix upon their Minds the good Impressions they had received in the Ark, and render them solicitous to inculcate the Principles of Religion upon their Children. Add to all this, that *Noah*, who lived 349 Years after the Flood, and whose pious Admonitions would be of much greater Weight and Authority, than when he was an unsuccessful Preacher of Righteousness to the Antediluvians, was the Instructor, and, for some time at least, the Governor of the new World.

FROM

FROM all this it will appear, that this was a very just and proper Dispensation for reforming Mankind, and restoring Religion in the Earth ; well adapted to that thoughtless Age, (when they seem not to have attained to any considerable Degree of Reasoning, and therefore not disposed to be wrought upon by Argument) and to the State of things in it, when no regular civil Governments and Laws were formed for the Administration of Justice, and the Restraint of Injury and Wrong. And it appears to have had the intended Effect, by suppressing Violence and Rapine, which never any more universally prevailed in the World ; and by fixing a Sense of Religion upon the Minds of Men, which afterwards was indeed perverted, but not quite extinguished. And as it stands recorded in sacred Writ, it is a Warning to the remotest Generations. In which View it is referred to 2 Pet. ii. 5. *And [God] spared not the old World, but saved Noah, the eighth Person, a Preacher of Righteousness, bringing in the Flood upon the World of the Ungodly ; and turning the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into Askes — making them an Example unto those that afterwards should live ungodly.*

C H A P. XIX.

*Of NOAH's Sacrifice, and the Divine Inter-
course on that Occasion.*

Gen. viii. to the End of the ixth Chapter.

NOAH, being restored to the Possession of the Earth, entered upon it with a solemn Act of Divine Worship, according the original Institution, *Gen. viii. 20. He builded an Altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean Beast, and of every clean Fowl, i. e. of such Beasts and Fowls as God had ordained for Sacrifices, and offered Burnt-Offerings upon the Altar.* Which as they were intended to denote, so they were in *Noah* accompanied with, Faith in the Mercy of God, Thankfulness for the late miraculous Deliverance, and the Dedication of himself, and of all his, to the Honor and Obedience of God, through the promised Redeemer; of whom *Noah* and the Patriarchs, we may well suppose, had a general Knowledge and Expectation. The Acceptableness of this Act of Devotion to God, is signified by his *smelling a sweet Savour*, רִיחַ הַנֶּחֱדָר Ver. 21. This one may call *Hieroglyphic Language*. *Hieroglyphics*, which by bodily Sensations, or external Representations,

tions, denoted abstract Notions, or the Sentiments of the Mind, were the Literature of the first Ages of the World. So here, the Approbation of the Judgment, or what is pleasing to the Mind, is signified by an Odor or Fragrance grateful to the Smell. Or the Taste and Relish of the Body is transferred to the Taste and Relish of the Mind. This Language is frequently used in the Levitical Law. As in *Lev. i. 9, 13, 17. ii. 2, 9. iii. 5, &c.* meaning the Acceptableness of the Sacrifice or Offering. So the Fragrance of Burnt-Incense represents the Acceptableness of sincere Prayer, *Psal. cxli. 2. Luke i. 10. Rev. viii. 3, 4.*

It is also applied, in the same Sense, to the Offering and Sacrifice of our Lord, *Ephes. v. 2. And walk in Love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an Offering and Sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling Savour.* God, who is a Spirit, can relish, or be pleased with, only that which is morally, or spiritually good, the Love and Obedience of the Heart. This is the only Savour that is grateful to him. And therefore, the Sacrifice of our Lord must have been an actual Exhibition of Obedience and Love; and the Sacrifices of *Noah*, and of the *Israelites*, must have been hieroglyphic Representations of, or Instructions in, the like moral Dispositions, in order to express, or produce them in the Hearts of the Worshipers.

shippers. *Smelling a sweet Savour* is plainly hieroglyphic, or figurative Language ; and therefore the Sacrifice, or Offering, the Object of such smelling, must also be figurative, representing those good Dispositions, which were, or ought to have been, in the Worshiper's Heart, and which were in the highest and most perfect Degree in our Lord. The Sacrifice of a clean Beast or Fowl figuratively represented what the Worshiper was, or ought to be and do ; and our Lord really was, and perfectly did what the Sacrifice represented. Hence *Sacrifice* is applied to beneficent Actions, or Actions morally good, and pleasing to God, *Psal.* iv. 5. l. 14, 23. *Phil.* iv. 18. *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16. And in *the Book of Wisdom* is applied to the whole of a virtuous Life, *as Gold in the Furnace hath he tried them, [afflicted good Men,] and received them as a Burnt-Offering.*

THE Smell, or Savour, of a Person, or thing, is the Quality of it, good or evil, which occasions the Approbation or Dislike of those that pass a Judgment upon it. *Exod.* v. 21. *You have made ריחנו our Savour,* that in us which is the Object of Pharaoh's Judgment, *to be abhorred, to stink, in the Eyes, the Opinion, of Pharaoh.* So *Gen.* xxxiv. 30. *Jer.* xlvi. 11. *Moab hath been at Ease from his Youth, and he hath settled on his Lees, — therefore his Taste, טעמו his Relish, remaineth in him, and his Scent, ריחו his Sa-*

vour,

your, his bad Qualities, *is not changed.* 2 Cor. ii. 14, 15, 16. *Now Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest, displays, the Savour, τὴν οσμὴν the excellent Qualities, of his Knowledge, the Knowledge of Christ, by us in every Place. For we are to God, εὐωδίαν, the sweet smelling Savour of Christ, [i. e. my Ministry is to God a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling Savour, which I offer unto him on the Behalf of Christ. See Rom. xv. 16.] both in regard of them that are saved, and also of them that perish. [For in both Cases the Counsels and Schemes of divine Wisdom are accomplished.] Though to the one we are, οσμή, the Savour of Death unto Death; and to the other we are the Savour of Life unto Life. [i. e. to the Minds of the one my Preaching is offensive; and rejecting it, they are advancing towards eternal Death; to the Minds of the other it is grateful and pleasing; and embracing it they are advancing towards Life eternal.] And who is sufficient for these things of so great Consequence? Note — A Savour of Death unto Death, is a Savour which occasions their advancing towards eternal Death.*

UPON the solemn Occasion of Noah's Sacrifice, *the Lord said in his Heart, i. e. determined, or resolved, that he would not again curse the Ground any more for Man's Sake; (Chap. viii. 21.) for [יָׁ though] the Imagination*

Imagination of Man's Heart is [should be] evil from his Youth. From his Youth, denotes a Corruption of Manners of long Continuance. See *Isai.* xlvii. 12, 15. *Jer.* iii. 25. *Ezek.* xxiii. 8. See also *Job* xxxi. 18. The Lord was also pleased to repeat to *Noah* and his Sons the same Blessing upon the Propagation of the human Species, and the same Marks of Distinction upon our Nature, as he had given *Adam* at his Creation, with an additional Grant of animal Food, (*Chap.* ix. 3, 4.) with this Restriction, that they should not *eat the Flesh* of an Animal *in the Life thereof, the Blood thereof*; or that they should not eat any Flesh cut off from any Animal while it is alive. At the same time God made a Covenant with *Noah*, and with every living Creature, or he made a free and absolute Grant, or Promise to them, that *all Flesh should not any more be cut off with the Waters of a Flood.* Of which more hereafter.

WHAT is here particularly to be observed is, the Institution of Magistracy, and the Punishment of Murder. Ver. 6. *Whoso sheds Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed.* Ver. 5. *And surely your Blood of your Lives will I require, at the Hand of every Beast will I require it; and at the Hand of Man, at the Hand of every Man's Brother, will I require the Life of Man.* The Beast that killed, or the Man that murdered a
O Man,

Man, is here commanded to be put to Death by *Man*, i. e. by the Magistrate, or Judge. Here Courts of Judicature are authorized, not only for the Punishment of Murder, but, by Parity of Reason, of any other great Offences, which may affect Life nearly as much as Murder.

THIS seems to be the original Institution of Magistracy, of which we have not hitherto the least Intimation in the sacred History. On the contrary, it appears from the Case of *Cain*, (Gen. iv. 15.) and of *Lamech*, (Gen. iv. 23, 24.) that Murder, the greatest of Crimes, was left to be punished, as God in his Providence should see fit. And if Murder, much more every lesser instance of Injury. It seems probable, there were no separate States, nor regular Governments, among the Antediluvians; but that as they spread over the Face of the Earth, they removed further from the Place of public Worship, lost a Sense of God, and lived in a disorderly Manner, exercising Violence and Outrage, as they had Power; and were instigated by Lust, Avarice and Revenge, till the Earth was filled with Violence. Which, I apprehend, could not have been the Case, under Laws and Governors, armed with Power to restrain Outrage and Injustice. For though Governors themselves, and their Creatures, may be tyrannical and oppressive, yet, for their own Security, they will

will not suffer their Subjects to break out into Anarchy and licentious Invasion of Life and Property, because this is open Rebellion against Governors. The State of the old World, probably, was like that of the *Israelites*, when there was *no King*, no Magistrate, among them, *but every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes*, Jud. xxi. 25. Which proves the Possibility of such a licentious State, and the shocking Disorders that would attend it.

THE leaving Mankind, in the first Ages of the World, in this loose and discretionary State, certainly, was not to lead them into Wickedness ; but, I conceive, to teach them by Experience the Necessity of Laws and Governors, and the Reasonableness of submitting to them. [See Chap. III. §. IV. the Corollary.] For even upon the contrary Supposition, that Magistracy, in some Form or other, was instituted from the Beginning of the World, yet it is plain, that Mankind in those Ages would not bear the Yoke, but universally shook it off. Nor could Government, in Fact, be permanently established, till the Ruin of the World demonstrated the Necessity of it. Therefore, if God did not see fit to establish Magistracy from the Beginning, it was because he knew Mankind would not bear the Restraints of Government with a rational Consent and Approbation ; (without which Consent and

Approbation, at least from the Majority, Government could not have been either erected or supported) till ~~sa~~ Experience had taught them the Utility and Importance of it. Thus a particular Species of Injustice, and even of Murder, is permitted under our present Dispensation, and, instead of being restrained, is established by Law ; I mean Persecution, or the taking away of Life for difference of Sentiments in Religion, which subsists in most Christian Countries. And this, I apprehend, the Wisdom of God has permitted, that Christians at length may be rationally convinced of the monstrous Iniquity of such Practice, and so be generally induced by the Sense of their own Minds, to approve and choose Goodness, Love, and mutual Forbearance ; which we hope will be the Genius and happy Temper of the next ensuing Dispensation. This is the only Method of moral Improvement, namely, when the Mind, by proper Methods, is led to apprehend, and freely imbrace, what is right and fit ; and I doubt not, takes Place in the gradual Advances of all, or of any Part of Mankind in Wisdom, as well as of particular single Persons. This, with what hath been said before, is the best Account I can give of this antediluvian Dispensation.

N. B. THE Curse upon *Canaan*, Ver. 25. is to be understood as affecting only the temporal Circumstances of his Posterity, a *Servant*

vant of Servants shall be be. As in Deut. xxviii. 16, 17, &c. Cursed shall be thy Basket and thy Store. Nor is it to be considered in *Noah* as a malevolent Wish, or Imprecation, but simply as a Prediction of the future State of *Ham's* Posterity ; as appears from the whole of *Noah's* Discourse, which is plainly prophetic.

C H A P. XX.

Of the DISPERSION at the Tower of BABEL.

Gen. x.

HERE *Moses* gives an Account how the Earth was peopled by the several Families, or Descendents of *Noah's* three Sons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, *Ver. 32.* For the Particulars of this curious Account consult the Commentators, especially *Bp. PATRICK.* What I would observe is this — That after the Account of the several Nations descended from each of *Noah's* Sons it is added, as in *Ver. 5.* *By these* Descendents of *Japhet*, *were the Isles*, or transmarine Countries, *of the Gentiles divided in their several Lands ; every one after his Tongue, or Language, after their Families, in their Nations.* The same is said *Ver. 20, 31.* of the Posterity of *Ham* and *Shem.* Which

plainly signifies, that they did not all speak the same Language ; but that the Descendants from *Noah's* Sons, at least in general, if not several of the particular Nations, had a Language peculiar to themselves, distinct from the rest, and unintelligible to them. *Noah* and his Posterity, while they lived together after the Flood, which must be for some considerable time, could have but one and the same Language amongst them. How they came to have different Languages, and how they were separated into several distant Countries, by a very memorable Event, *Moses* relates in the next Chapter.

WHEN *Noah's* Family was numerous enough, probably the Lord, by the Mouth of *Noah*, commanded them to separate into different Countries, particularly specified, that the Earth might be better cultivated and governed. Certainly their Division and Removal into *distant* Countries (*Gen. x. 5.*) must have been a general public Act. And, as *Moses* saith, the Earth was divided into Nations in *Peleg's* Days, (*Ver. 25, 32.*) it seems to imply, that it was done by a divine Command, and not accidentally, as any might choose a more convenient Situation. Which is more clearly exprest, *Deut. xxxii. 8.* where it is said, *when the most High divided to the Nations their Inheritance, when he separated the Sons of Adam*, [referring to this Division of the Earth] *he set the Bounds of*

of the People, the adjacent Nations, according to the Number of the future Children of Israel, leaving for them a convenient Situation, and Room sufficient. In Prosecution of this Design, the whole Earth, except, perhaps, the elder Patriarchs, and their Attendants, journeying from the Mother-colony towards the West, and finding a spacious fruitful Vale in the Land of *Shinar*, there they determined to settle, and build a City and a Tower, reaching up to Heaven, or of a very great Height. *Deut. i. 28. ix. 1. Psal. cvii. 25, 26.* [An Hyperbole.]

THEIR Intention was to make themselves a Name, and to prevent their being scattered abroad upon the Face of the whole Earth, (Ver. 4.) as God had probably ordered they should. The Scheme was to keep together, and very likely under one Head. *Schultens*, upon *Job i. 1.* derives שׂם a Name, from the Arabic Verb שמר or שמה to be high, elevated, eminent. And according to him, the primary and proper Notion of שׂם is a Mark or Sign, standing out, rising up, or exposed to open View; a standing Mark or Title of Distinction and Eminence. *2 Sam. vii. 23.* — and to make him a Name, a Monument of Honor and Eminence. *Chap. viii. 13. 1 Kin. v. 3, 5.* — build an House unto, or for, the Name, Honor, eminent Distinction, of the Lord, to denote, that he is the only true God, and King of the *Israelites*.

1 Kings viii. 16, 29 1 Chron. xvii. 21. — *to make thee a Name, a Monument, of Greatness and Terribleness.* Isai. xvii. 7. lv. 13. — *it shall be to the Lord for a Name, i. e. for an everlasting Sign, that shall not be cut off.* Chap. lxiii. 12, 14. So in this Place, Gen. xi. 4. — *and let us, say the Heads or Leaders, make us a Name, a Monument or Token of Superiority and Eminence, I conceive, to signify to all succeeding Generations, that they were the true original Governors, to whom all Mankind ought to be in Subjection ; lest other Leaders starting up should carry off Parties, and so break the Body, and set up separate Governments.* It seems to have been a Piece of State-Policy, to keep all Mankind together, under the present Chiefs and their Successors. And the lofty Tower was probably intended to command every Part of the Town, and keep off any Body of Men, that should attempt to break in upon them.

BUT God, whose Wisdom perfectly foresaw the mischievous Effects of such an Attempt, determined to frustrate and defeat it. By this Scheme a great Part of the Earth must for a long time have been uninhabited, uncultivated, and over-run with Beggary, and wild Beasts ; which, as it was, for a long time, according to ancient Authors, exercised the Industry and Valor of the primitive Heroes in hunting and subduing them.

It

It was thus *Nimrod*, that mighty Hunter, gained his Renown. *Gen. x. 9. He was a mighty Hunter before the Lord.* Which is an Hebrew Phrase, to signify the greatest, and most eminent thing of any kind. *Acts vii. 20. Αὑτιος τῷ θεῷ, exceeding fair ; 2 Cor. viii. 1. Τὴν χάριν τῷ θεῷ, the very great Liberality bestowed by the Churches of Macedonia. Chap. x. 4. Δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ, exceeding powerful. Psalm. lxxx. 10, 11. אֲרְזֵי-אֵל the Cedars of God, the goodly Cedars.*

MOST probably the bad Effects, which this Project would have had upon the Minds, the Morals, and Religion of Mankind, was the chief Reason why God interposed to crush it as soon as it was formed. It manifestly had a direct Tendency to Tyranny, Oppression, and Slavery. Whereas in forming several independent Governments by a small Body of Men, the Ends of Government, and the Security of Liberty and Property, would be much better attended to, and more firmly established ; which, in Fact, was generally the Case, if we may judge of the rest, by the Constitution of one of the most eminent, the Kingdom of *Egypt*. *Gen. xlvii. 15—27. The Egyptians were Masters of their Persons and Properties, till they sold them to Pharaoh for Bread. And then their Servitude amounted to no more, than the fifth Part of the Produce of the Country, as an annual Tax payable to the King ;*

King ; which is not near so much as we, with all our English Liberties, pay yearly to the Church and Government.

CORRUPTION may creep into Religion under any Constitution, but Tyranny and despotic Power is the readiest and surest Way to deprive Men of the Use of Understanding and Conscience ; and Vice and Idolatry would have spread much faster, had the whole World, in one Body, been under the absolute Dominion of vicious, insolent, idolatrous Monarchs. This would have been a State of things just in the opposite Extreme to the antediluvian Licentiousness, and would have been nearly as pernicious to Virtue ; as it must have sunk Mankind into the basest Servility of Mind, and have stocked the Earth with a mean spirited Race of Mortals, who durst not open their own Eyes, make any generous Use of their own Faculties, or relish the Bounty of Heaven with Pleasure and Thankfulness. Ημισυ γαρ τ' αρετης αποαινυται-δελιον ημαρ, saith *Homer* (*Odyss.* P. Ver. 322.) — *Whatever Day makes a Man a Slave, takes half his Worth away.* “ Thus
 “ I have heard, saith *Longinus*, Sect. XLIV.
 “ if what I have heard in this Case deserve
 “ Credit, that the Cases in which Dwarfs
 “ are kept, not only prevent the future
 “ Growth of those who are inclosed in them,
 “ but also diminish what Bulk they already
 “ have, by too close Constriction of their
 “ Parts.

“ Parts. So Slavery, be it never so easy,
“ yet is Slavery still ; and may deservedly
“ be called, the Prison of the Soul, and the
“ public Dungeon.”

FOR these wise and beneficent Reasons, I presume, the divine Providence interposed, and baffled the Project ; which in the then Circumstances of the Projectors, would otherwise have been unhappily successful, by confounding, and altering their Language in such Manner, as that they could not understand one another ; and so were obliged to desist from the Work they had begun, to separate into many smaller Bodies, and to seek for Settlements at a Distance from each other, as the several Companies, by the Sameness of Speech, were capable of conversing together, and possibly in the very Countries which God had marked out for them.

THUS the Contagion of Wickedness, for some time at least, had Bounds set to it ; evil Example was confined, and could not stretch its Influence beyond the Limits of one Country ; nor could wicked Projects be carried on with universal Concurrence by many little Colonies, separated by the natural Boundaries of Mountains, Rivers, Deserts, Seas, and hindered from associating together by a Variety of Languages unintelligible to each other. And further, in this dispersed State, they would, whenever God pleased,
be

be made Checks reciprocally upon each other by Invasions and Wars ; which would weaken the Power, and humble the Pride of corrupt and vicious Communities. This Dispensation, therefore, was properly calculated to prevent a second universal Degeneracy. God therein dealing with Men as rational Agents, and suiting his Scheme to their present State and Circumstances. This Dispersion probably happened about 240 Years after the Flood.

C H A P. XXI.

Of the מועד COUNCIL of GOD ; or a Criticism upon those Words, Let us go down, Gen. xi. 7.

ALL allow, that the *Lord's coming down to see the City, and Tower*, Gen. xi. 5, is to be understood *ανθρωποπαθως* by Way of Accommodation to our Conceptions ; and means no more, but that by the Effects, he made it appear, that he observed their Motions, and knew their Intentions. This is a very common, and in our present embodied State, a very proper Way of representing the Actions of Deity. But when *Jehovah* is represented as saying, *Go to, let us go down*, Verse 7, as before, Chap. i. 26, he had said, *Let us make Man*, &c. learned
Men

Men have supposed, that this is to be taken literally, and that God here spake to some Beings included in his own Nature and Substance. Whereas this also is a Figure of Speech, which is to be understood as the foregoing. Kings transact their most important Affairs in a solemn Council. Hence God is pleased to represent himself as having likewise his סוד or privy Council. And the Determinations of his Providence are described, after the Manner of Men, as having been made in that Council, in order to express the Wisdom, Importance, and Certainty of them. Thus, and for this Purpose, *Jehovah* is here, and in *Gen. i. 26*, represented as speaking in his Council, *Let us make Man, let us go down, and there confound their Language.*

OF this Council, I apprehend, *Job* speaks, Chap. xxix. 4. — *when the secret Council בְּסוֹד of God was upon my Tabernacle*; when the august Assembly, where God's Counsels and Decrees are passed, was held, as it were over my Habitation; and it seemed to be his peculiar Care to prosper me and my Family. To this Council the Prophets in Vision are supposed to be admitted as Standers-by, and Hearers of what is there decreed, and resolved upon. *Job xv. 8.* הֲבִסוֹר אֵלֶיךָ הָשִׁמַּע *hast thou heard, or been a Hearer, in the secret Council of God.* Jer. xxiii. 17, 18. *They, the false Prophets, say still unto them that*

that despise me, the Lord hath said, Ye shall have Peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the Imagination of his own Heart, No Evil shall come unto you. יהור כי מי עמר בסוד For *who hath stood* [as a Waiter, or Servant, ready to carry God's Messages to his People. So לפני מלך עמר one that stands before the King, is properly the King's Minister. And when *Elisha* saith, (2 Kings iii. 14.) *as the Lord liveth before whom I stand*, he means, *whose Minister I am.*] *in the secret Council, or Assembly, of Jehovah, and hath seen and heard his Word?*

Q. D. Which of you hath been wrapt in Vision, and admitted as a Stander-by and Hearer in that great Assembly, where God's Councils are held, and hath brought a Message to his People from thence? No, you go presumptuously with Messages of your own Heads. Verse 21. *I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. ואם עמרו בסודי* But if they had stood in my Council, and had caused my People to hear my Words, then they should have turned them from their evil Way, and from the evil of their Doings. This Connection of the Prophets with the Council of God may serve to explain *Jonah's* fleeing from the Presence of, or from before, the Lord, *Jon. i. 2.* He was sent upon a frightful and dangerous Message; but as he judged, I suppose, that the Council of God

was

was held in no other Land, but that of *Israel*, he hoped to break off his Connection with it, by removing to a remote Country among the Gentiles.

THE Vision of *Micaiah* (1 Kings xxii. 19—24.) will set this Affair in the strongest Light. *And he said, Hear thou the Word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his Throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing by him, on his right Hand and on his left. And the Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one said on this Manner, and another on that Manner. And there came forth a Spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying Spirit in the Mouth of all his Prophets. And he said, thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so.* Here the Lord is shewn in Council, after the Manner of Men, deliberating upon this Affair. Now whether there was any such real Consultation is not necessary for us to enquire. Thus it was represented in all its Circumstances to the Prophet, and stamp'd upon his Mind in Vision; and it was God who directed him to use it in this Form, as appears plainly from the solemn Introduction, *Hear thou therefore the Word of the Lord.* And though it should only be a parabolical Vision, yet the Drift and Substance
of

of it was a divine infallible Truth, namely, that *Abab's* Prophets prophesied Lies; and this by the divine Permission, and the Instigation of the wicked Spirit, who was a Lyar from the Begining, and the Father of Lyes.

A PASSAGE similar to this, is that in the Book of *Job*, Chap. i. 6. *Now there was a Day when the Sons of God, Angels, came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, &c.* And again, Chap. ii. 1, &c. Here we see is the same grand Assembly in the Case of *Job*, as in the foregoing Instance of *Abab*. The same Host of Heaven, called here *the Sons of God*, presenting themselves before Jehovah, as in the Vision of *Micaiah* they are said to stand on his right Hand and on his left. A wicked Spirit appears among them, here called *Satan*, an Adversary, and there *a lying Spirit*; both of them bent on Mischief, and ready to do Hurt, as far as God should give them leave. And the Meaning in both Cases is the same, that God in his wise Providence permitted Satan to afflict *Job*, and the lying Spirit to deceive *Abab*. Only *Micaiah* delivers his Representation as a Prophet, in the Exercise of his Office, and as he received it, that is to say, in a Vision; *I saw the Lord sitting on his Throne, &c.* The other, [probably *Job* himself,

himself, who was not unacquainted with the *Council* of God, as we have seen.] as an Historian, inter-weaves it with the History in the plain, narrative Stile, *There was a Day* &c. The things delivered to us by both these sacred Writers, are in Substance the same, equally high, and above the Reach of meer human Sight and Knowledge. Note—the Representations of this Kind are founded in the Doctrine of Angels, good and bad, especially the former, as the Instruments of Providence. A Point revealed, no doubt, from the Beginning, and well understood in the earliest Ages; witness *Jacob's Ladder*, with *the Angels of God ascending and descending upon it.* Gen. xxviii. 12.

ISAIAH also in Vision stood in the Council of God, Chap. vi. 1, &c. *Where he saw the Lord sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple. Above it stood the Seraphim, the angelic Host, &c.* The Matter in Consultation was, Verse 6. *Whom shall I send, and who will go upon the prophetic Errand, for us, using deliberative Language, and the plural Number, as in the two Texts under Consideration, Let us make Man—Let us go down.—Isaiah readily offered his Service, Verse 8. And the Lord delivered to him his Commission and Message, Verse 9. And he said, Go and tell this People, &c.*

EZEKIEL in the same Manner in Vision stood in the Council of the Lord, Chap. i. 1. *The Heavens were* (i. e. the Temple was) *opened, and I saw Visions of God*; namely, the four living Creatures, or Cherubims, representing the Church of God, attending upon *the Glory of the Lord*, or the Shechinah, Verse 28, and seated upon a Throne, Verse 26. *And he said unto Ezekiel*, Chap. ii. 3. *Son of Man, I send thee to the Children of Israel, &c.*

ZECHARIAH too, Chap. i. 7, 8, &c. to the End of the sixth Chapter, is represented as conversing with the Lord in his Council, and with an Angel; though the Scene is not described so distinctly as in the other Places.

JOHN also *in the Spirit*, i. e. in a Vision, Rev. i. 10, was present in the same Council of God, described in the 4th and 5th Chapters of the *Revelation*. Chap. iv. 1. *A Door was opened in Heaven*, in the Temple; *John* was invited to attend, a Throne was set in Heaven, with a majestic Personage upon it, attended by the Cherubim, or the Church, and the angelic Host. The Matter, which was there very solemnly transacted, was the future State of the Church to the End of the World.

THIS is the prophetic Way of telling us *how* a thing was done, which really was done, but in a Way to us invisible. Thus things of the greatest Importance were re-
presented

presented in the strongest Images to the Mind of the Prophet; and in this Way infinite Wisdom would have them described and represented to us. Nor should we quarrel with our Maker for creating us with such Faculties as are most affected and imprest with Truths, that are conveyed in this Manner; for those Truths make the deepest Impression which first enter like a Picture into the Imagination, and from thence are stamp't upon the Memory.

NOTE—*Homer*, previously to Events, represents the Consultations of his fictitious Deities in the same narrative Way, to denote, that all things are subject to an overruling Providence. A Method practised long before him, and very probably derived from the truly inspired.

I SHALL only further observe, (1.) That *סוד* is sometimes applied to worshipping Assemblies, *Psal.* lxxxix. 7. cxi. 1. (2.) Sometimes it signifies the thing that is transacted, commanded, or established in the Council of God. *Psal.* xxv. 14. *Prov.* iii. 32. So it may be understood, *Amos* iii. 7. *The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth סודו his secret Council unto his Servants the Prophets.*

C H A P. XXII.

Of the PATRIARCHAL RELIGION.

WE should now advance to the next divine Dispensation, the Calling of *Abraham*, but before we proceed it may be of Use to gain the clearest Notions we are able of the State of Religion among the Nations after the Deluge.

ABOUT 425 Years after the Deluge, and 185 after the Dispersion, the Lord *said unto Abraham*, (Gen. xii. 1) *Get thee out of thy Country*, which was *Ur* of the Chaldees, (Gen. xi. 28.) *and from thy Kindred, and from thy Father's House, unto a Land that I will shew thee*. Compare this with *Josh. xxiv. 2*. *Joshua said unto all the People, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your Fathers dwelt on the other Side of the Flood, [in Mesopotamia beyond the River Euphrates,] in old time, even Terah, the Father of Abraham, and the Father of Nachor; and they served other Gods; that is to say, they were Idolaters*. Some learned Men suppose, that in the Days of *Reu*, i. e. some time before the Year 370. after the Deluge, the *Egyptians* and *Babylonians* began to introduce idolatrous Principles and Practices; which from the fore-quoted Place in *Joshua*, it is certain,

crept

crept into the Family of *Shem*; some, and some of the principal of his Posterity, growing vain in their Imaginations, and worshipping the heavenly Bodies, with a divine, or however with an undue Honor. For this Species of Idolatry seems to have been the most ancient, as this, and no other, is mentioned in the Book of *Job*. Chap. xxxi. 26, 27, 28. *If I have beheld the Sun when it shined; or the Moon walking in brightness; and my Heart hath been secretly inticed, or my Mouth hath kissed my Hand:—this also were an Iniquity to be punished by the Judge, for I should have denied the God that is above.*

THE Worship of the heavenly Bodies is supposed to have prevailed among the Nations in the Days of *Moses*, Deut. iv. 19. xvii. 3. and was continued long after, 2 *Kings* xxi. 3, 5. xxiii. 4. *Jer.* xlv. 17, 19. The Splendor and great Utility of the heavenly Bodies would naturally strike the Minds of Mankind; and there would not then, any more than at any other time, be wanting artful Men, who for their own Advantage, and the Honor of superior Wisdom, would supply Arguments for this Idolatry, as the most effectual Mean of securing all the Enjoyments of Life, and inculcate them strongly upon the Minds of the weak and credulous, who have always been the most numerous Part of Mankind. *Maimonides*, the learned

Jew, (as quoted by AINSWORTH upon *Gen.* iv. 26.) supposes the Advocates of this corrupt Worship argued after this Manner. “ They said—For as much as God hath
 “ created these heavenly Bodies, to govern
 “ the World, and set them on high, and
 “ imparted Honor unto them, and they are
 “ Ministers that minister before him, it is
 “ meet that Men should praise, and glorify,
 “ and give them Honor. For this is the
 “ Will of God, that we magnify and ho-
 “ nor whomsoever he magnifieth and ho-
 “ noreth ; even as a King would have them
 “ honored, that stand before him ; and this
 “ is honoring the King himself. When this
 “ thing was come up into their Hearts,
 “ they began to build Temples to heavenly
 “ Bodies, and to praise and glorify them
 “ with Words, and to worship before them,
 “ that they might, in their misguided Opi-
 “ nion, obtain Favor of the Creator.” Thus
 you see, the first Corrupters of Religion had
 Principles and Reasons ; and perhaps as good
 as those, who have in like Manner corrupt-
 ed Christianity, by introducing Idolatry into
 it.

THIS Corruption was not at first univer-
 sal, it spread gradually. And therefore,
 though in *Abraham’s* Days it had made a
 considerable Progress, yet even then, and for
 some time after, we meet with some emi-
 nent Persons, who were not of *Abraham’s*
 Family,

Family, that retained a just Sense of God, and the Purity of his Worship. For Instance, *Melchizedeck*, King of *Salem*, Gen. xiv. 18. who was (Heb. vii. 3.) *without Father, without Mother, without Descent*, ἀγενεαλογητος, without a Genealogy, *having neither begining of Days, nor end of Life*, recorded in the History of the Patriarchs from *Noah* to *Abraham*. For (Verse 6.) *his Descent, or Genealogy, was not counted from them, in the Abrahamic Line*; but for all that, he was a Person of great Eminence in Religion. Gen. xiv. 18, &c. “ For he was
 “ a Worshiper of the true God, and a
 “ Person of the most exemplary Justice,
 “ and sincere Piety, remaining absolutely
 “ untainted, amidst the general Corruption
 “ of the Country, in which he lived; and
 “ who for the better promoting of true Religion, was himself a *Priest*, as well as a
 “ *King*, and performed the sacred Offices
 “ of it among his own People. This great
 “ Man came forth to meet, and to congratulate *Abraham*, and provided him a
 “ princely Entertainment for himself and his
 “ Men, for their Refreshment, after they
 “ had ingaged with, and defeated five Kings.
 “ And then, as *Priest*, in which Capacity
 “ he was superior to *Abraham*, (Heb. vii. 7.)
 “ he solemnly gave *Abraham* his Blessing,
 “ or Wish of Happiness; putting up his
 “ hearty Prayers to the great Creator and

“ Governor of the World, to confirm the
 “ Blessing he had pronounced upon him;
 “ as also his humble Praises and Thanksgiv-
 “ ings for the remarkable Mercies of his
 “ late Victory. And *Abraham*, on the other
 “ side, paid his Acknowledgment to the Al-
 “ mighty, by presenting the Tenth of what
 “ he had taken in the Battle to *Melchizedeck*
 “ his Priest, by whom he had been so de-
 “ voutly blessed.” PYLE.

NOTE—*Melchizedeck's* Priesthood, as it
 was prior to that of the Jewish Priests, so
 it was of a distinct and superior Order, as
 the Apostle argues, *Heb. vii.* For long after
 the Institution of the Jewish Priesthood,
 the Lord, with an Oath declares, that the
Messiah should be a Priest for ever, after the
 Order [in the Hebrew עַל־רִבְרֶתִי *secundum*
Rem, according to the Affair, the Case; which
 as it relateth to a kind or sort of Priesthood,
 is well translated δια ταξιν] of *Melchizedeck*,
Psal. cx. 4. Of what Order was *Melchize-*
deck? The Apostle directs us to understand
 his Names appellatively, or as denoting a
 Character of moral Excellence; *King of*
Righteousness, or a righteous King; and *King*
of Peace, or Blessing or Happiness, as he
 wished well to others, and endeavoured to
 make them happy, (*Heb. vii. 2.*) which is
 the highest Character of Worth and Excel-
 lence any moral Agent can sustain. Thus
 he was *the Priest*, or officiated in the Service
 of

of the most High God. And thus the Object of his Priesthood, and consequently his Priesthood itself, was of an eternal, unchangeable, and universal Nature, even Righteousness and Goodness, not limited to time or Family. For the Scripture gives no Account of his Birth, Death, or Genealogy. We read of no Predecessor or Successor in his Office, as in the Jewish Priests. [Note—this Argument is adapted (*ad hominem*) to the Jews, who in this Way, or by Descent from *Aaron* and *Levi* judged of the Validity of their Priests.] But being of an universal unchangeable Nature, must subsist as long as there are any moral Agents, that live in obedience to God.

THUS our Lord was made Priest after the order of *Melchizedeck*, i. e. *not after the Law of a carnal positive Commandment*, which confined the Office to a fleshly, mortal Descent, and employed in certain external Rites, and Ceremonies; but *according to that real Power*, which is productive of *endless*, or eternal *Life*, namely, true Holiness. For Verse 17, *God declared, thou art a Priest for ever, after the Order of the King of Righteousness.* And Chap. i. 8, 9. *Unto the Son he saith—Thy Throne, O God, is everlasting! A Sceptre of Rectitude is the Sceptre of thy Kingdom. Thou hast loved Righteousness, and hated Iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee King and Priest, with the Oil*

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Oil of Gladness above thy Fellows. And still nearer to the Case, Chap. v. 8. *Though he were a Son*, in the highest Sense, before he came into the World, yet *was he disciplined in Obedience*, as if he had been a Learner, *by the things which he suffered.* Verse 9. *And being made perfect*, having exhibited a perfect Character of all moral Excellence, *he became the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him.* And it was on this Account, Verse 10, that he was called and constituted *of God an high Priest after the Order of the King of Righteousness.* For, as the Apostle concludes his Dissertation upon this very Subject, (*Heb. vii. 26.*) *Such an high Priest became us*, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate from Sinners*, and *made higher than the Heavens*, or the Angels, in order to raise us to their Happiness.

MELCHIZEDECK was eminently religious. And probably *Abraham's* Neighbours and Confederates, *Mamre, Eschol and Amer*, Gen. xiv. 13. were good and pious. For though they were *Amorites*, it was about 400 Years after this, before the Sins of that Nation were full.

THE Book of *Job* gives the clearest and most extensive View of the patriarchal Religion. The Reality of his Person, the Eminence of his Character, his Fortitude and Patience in very great Afflictions, his preceding and subsequent Felicity, are allowed by all; and it is generally supposed that he lived a Generation or two before *Moses*; and, probably,

probably, the Book was wrote by himself, in the time of his restored Prosperity.

SOME learned Men indeed, as *Grotius*, *Codurcus*, *Le Clerc*, and others, pretend that this noble Performance was written about a thousand Years after the time in which *Job* lived; namely, in or near the time of the *Babylonish* Captivity; alledging, “ that frequent Chaldaisms, as the plural ? for \square ? “ are to be found in it; that some Passages “ are taken from the *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, and “ *Ecclesiastes*; that there are more than a “ hundred Words, partly *Syriac*, partly *Ara- “ bic*, which are not to be found in the “ other Parts of Scripture; which are all “ Signs that the Author lived in the later “ times, when many Words, borrowed from “ the Idiom of the neighbouring Nations, “ were admitted into the Hebrew.”

IT is one Mark of the Simplicity of very ancient times, that in the Inventory of *Job*’s Estate, no Mention is made of Money, but only of Oxen, Sheep, Camels, Asses, Servants. And *Grotius* himself owns, “ That “ there is no Mention in the Book of *Job* “ of any Law, or religious Rites, but such “ as were traditional, [*Chap.* viii. 8, 9, 10. “ xv. 18, 19. xxii. 15, 16.] nor of any “ Points of History, nor of any idolatrous “ Practices, but such as were of the more “ ancient times, before the Mosaic Institution. [*Chap.* xx. 4, 5, meaning *Adam*. “ xxii. 15, 16.] And that the Length of
“ *Job*’s

“ *Job’s* Life, extended to about 200 Years,
 “ agrees also with the same times ; that the
 “ Country where it happened was *Arabia*,
 “ as appears, not only from the Names of
 “ Places, *Uz, Teman, Shubab*, but from the
 “ many *Arabic* Words here used.” And
 might not *Grotius* from hence have fairly
 and strongly concluded, that the Writer was
 an *Arabian* ? No. He saith, “ it was writ-
 “ ten by some Hebrew.” Why so ? Because
Arabia, Job’s Country, is called *the East*.
 Chap. i. 3. And it was usual with the He-
 brews to call *Arabia* the East, as he has
 shewn upon *Mat. ii. 1*. But the Arabian
Magi themselves, in the next Verse, call
 their own Country *Arabia*, the East ; and
 so might *Job*, or any other Arabian in *Job’s*
 time. The East-Country was the common
 Name of *Arabia*, as the West-Country is
 the general Name of one Part of *England*.
 Many Words, used in this Book, are not to
 be found in other Parts of Scripture. The
 Reason is, because it is so ancient, that some
 Words therein are grown obsolete, and their
 true Meaning is hard to be recovered. It is
 therefore the most difficult, because it is the
 most ancient Book in the sacred Code. Had
 it been wrote in later times, the Language
 would have been more intelligible.

IT is no Argument that the Author of
 this Book took similar or same Expressions
 from *David’s* or *Solomon’s* Writings, [Com-
 pare *Psal. cvii. 40.* with *Job xii. 21, 24.*]
 because

because it is more probable, that *David* and *Solomon* borrowed such Expressions from the Book of *Job*. [Compare *Job* xxxix. 33. *Mat.* xxiv. 28.] *Schultens*, a very good Judge, affirms, that the Style of the Book hath all the Marks of a most venerable and remote Antiquity; and that the Chaldaisms, as some call them, particularly the Plurals in *Job* are true Hebrew and Arabic, and that of the most ancient Stamp. *Job* is honorably mentioned with *Noah* and *Daniel*, *Ezek.* xiv. 12—20. Hence it follows, (1.) That *Job* is no fictitious Character, but a real Person, as truly as *Noah* and *Daniel*. (2.) That he was, as well as they, a Person of distinguished Piety. (3.) That he was well known and celebrated as such amongst the *Jews*, to whom *Ezekiel's* Prophecy was directed. (4.) That he must either have been of the Seed of *Israel*, or, like *Noah*, of the patriarchal times; otherwise the *Jews*, separated from, and raised in spiritual Privileges above all other Nations, would never have proposed to themselves one of their Gentile, uncircumcised Neighbours, of whom they had a mean Opinion, as an Example of the greatest Piety, nor have admitted his Story into their Canon. If he was of the patriarchal times (for an Israelite he could not be) he must have been at the Distance of about a Thousand Years before *Ezekiel*. Meer oral Tradition of such a Person could not have subsisted

sisted through so long a Space of time, without appearing, at last, as uncertain or fabulous. There must, therefore, have been some History of *Job* in *Ezekiel's* time ; no other History, but that which we now have, and which has always had a Place in the Hebrew Code, was ever heard of, or pretended. Therefore this must be the History of *Job* in *Ezekiel's* time ; and which must have been generally known, and read as true and authentic, and, consequently, must have been wrote near to the Age in which the Fact was transacted, and not in after times, when its Credibility would have been greatly diminished.

IN short, should I aver, that this is the oldest and noblest Book in the World, I should have the Vote of all the best Critics ; and the very Frame and Cast of the Book itself would justify the Assertion.

C H A P. XXIII.

Of Job's Case and Character.

THE Book of *Job* is the History of a real Sufferer, *Job* ; and the Substance of a real Conversation with his Friends, about his Sufferings, in a poetic Dress. *Job* was a Prince of the greatest Eminence, Wealth, and Authority among the People
of

of the East ; whose Piety and Integrity equalled his temporal Grandure, *Chap.* i. 1, 2, 3 ; of the strictest Religion and Virtue ; the Patron of the injured Poor and Fatherless ; the Scourge of Injustice and Oppression ; highly honored and esteemed by the good, revered and dreaded by the vicious and profane. *Chapters* xxix. and xxxi. This Man so good, and so glorious, was, by the divine Permission, and Malice of the Devil, at once reduced to the most indigent and deplorable Circumstances, stript of all his Substance, bereaved of all his Children, Seven Sons and Three Daughters, and, soon after, seized with a most noisom and painful Disease, from Head to Foot ; which rendered him the most shocking Spectacle of Sorrow and Wretchedness. The Country, so far as the Fame of his Grandure and Religion had spread, would be full of his Story and of Astonishment. The religious would be inclined to conclude, that such signal and sudden Calamities, could be no other than the Judgments of God upon a Man, who, under the Mask of Religion, had concealed a wicked and profligate Life. The wicked and profane would triumph in his Sufferings, as a Justification of their own bad Principles and Practices, and as a Demonstration of the Insignificancy of the strictest Regards to God and his Worship. *Chap.* xvi. 9, 10, 11. xvii. 6. His Relations and Acquaintance, struck

struck with Horror and Aversion to such a despicable, vile, abandoned Creature, would not own him. His Wife and Family treated him with Unkindness and Neglect, *Chap. xix. 13—19.* The basest of Men broke in upon him like a Legion of Fiends, made his Afflictions their Merriment, treated him with all Manner of Indignities, Calumnies, and Slander; and even *spared not to spit in his Face*, *Chap. xxx. 1—15.* Scarce ever were the Feelings of the human Heart oppressed with such a complicated Load of Grief; scarce ever was a Profession of Religion so much exposed to Censure, Reproach, and Insult.

AND how did the good Man bear all this? With heroic Bravery, that is to say, with a Patience as steady and uniform as human Infirmary will admit. [*Patience is sincere Adherence to God and Duty, under all Difficulties and Discouragements; and the Ground of Patience is Faith, or a full Persuasion of the Power, Goodness, and Wisdom of God.*] When his Calamities, the Loss of his numerous Herds, Flocks and Servants, and of his dearest Children, partly by the Hands of Violence, partly by Lightning and Storm; when these Calamities rushed upon him like an Inundation, though he felt all the Pangs of the most grievous Affliction, and used such Expressions of his doleful Case, as were customary at that time; [*Chap. i. 20.—rent his*

his Mantle, shaved his Head, fell down upon the Ground, Chap. ii. 8, 12. Sprinkled Dust upon their Heads ; See 1 Sam. iv. 12. 2 Sam. xiii. 19. Josh. vii. 6. Ezek. xxvii. 30. Iliad xviii. 22.] yet he behaved like a wise and good Man, prostrating himself upon the Ground in a humble Sense of his own Unworthiness, and a patient Submission to the Will of God, composing his Mind into a calm and quiet Adoration of his supreme Dominion and unblemished Justice, Chap. i. 20, 21. " I came," saith he, " by the
" Divine Will into the World, a naked
" helpless Creature ; and by the same Will
" I must shortly return to the Dust. I am
" bereaved of my most valuable and dearest
" temporal Enjoyments, but by the Per-
" mission of a wise and righteous God. His
" own he gave ; his own, for wise Ends, he
" hath taken away. I acquiesce in his so-
" vereign Disposals, and adore the incon-
" testible Purity and Righteousness of his
" Dealings with me." O brave Soul ! O happy Man, who could keep up good Thoughts of God, and Communion with him under the sharpest Strokes of his Rod !

WHEN covered over with painful Boils, in the Place and Posture of an humble Penitent, he was probably pouring out his Submissions and Supplications to Heaven, his Wife spared not to reproach him with his preposterous Godliness. Chap. ii. 9, 10. *Doſt*

Q

thou

thou still retain thine Integrity by blessing God, and dying? Q. D. "Will you bless God when he is destroying you? Will you call upon him, and believe he is good, when he hath ruined your Estate and Family, and, in spite of all your humble Submissions, is slaughtering your Body, and within a Stroke of your Life?" But *Job* returned no other than a mild Answer, as became a good Man, and affectionate Husband. "You speak not like yourself," said he, "but as a Woman void of Understanding. Is it fit God should always smile upon sinful Creatures? Shall we say, he is not just when he brings us into Afflictions? We receive what pleaseth us with Joy, and it is but reasonable that we receive what is ungrateful with a calm Resignation; seeing both come from the same wise and sovereign Disposer of all things." Still *Job* is patient, and, under every Trial, adheres to God and Duty.

THE Composure and Steadiness of his Mind was more severely tried by his three Friends, *Eliphaz*, *Bildad*, and *Zophar*, Men of the same Rank, and of like good Sense and Piety; who dwelt in some of the adjacent Provinces, and in whose Familiarity he had, probably, been long happy. The Report of his Sufferings, of the Ruin of his Character, and the Wound thereby given to Religion, having reached their Ears, they
 agreed,

agreed, with a sincere Intention, to join their Endeavours in administering the only Advice and Consolation, they apprehended, his Case would admit. For, as the Suspicions were very strong, and his Calamities carried evident Marks of divine Inflictions, they had the same Opinion of them with the rest of the World, and believed they were the just Judgments of God upon a Hypocrite ; and therefore were determined, by all Means, to fix a Sense of Guilt upon his Conscience, in order to bring him to true Repentance, and so to a solid Interest in the divine Favor and Blessing. But when they were come, and had found their late flourishing, honorable, and highly esteemed Friend, reduced to the most lothsome and miserable Wretch, that was sitting in the Ashes, they were astonished beyond Expression ; and being confirmed in their evil Suspicions, though they sat with him on the Ground, yet, as their bad Opinion of him would not allow them to say any thing comfortable and encouraging, they chose to say nothing at all for seven or several Days together, *Chap. ii. 12.* The Sight of his old Acquaintance, and their unfavorable Manner of Condolence, raised his Passion of Sorrow to such a Pitch, that it burst out into a Torrent of the most bitter Reflections upon his Birth-day ; wishing it were struck out of the Number of

Days, or rendered as odious and detestable to all others, as it was to himself.

UPON this, *Eliphaz*, probably the oldest and most honorable of the three, addressed himself to *Job*, and, in the softest Manner, openeth their Sense of his Case ; namely, that, in their Apprehensions, he had been very defective in the Character to which he had pretended ; that great Sufferings must be the Punishment of great Sins ; and that they could recommend to him no other Method of regaining his former Peace and Prosperity, but Repentance, and seeking unto God for Pardon. In short, they soon declared plainly, that they judged he had been a very wicked Man, and that his Calamities were an evident Indication of the Wrath of God against him as such. This *Job* flatly denied ; and this is the Matter in dispute between him and his Friends. Which Dispute, as is usual in such Cases, was carried on with a growing Eagerness and Heat on both Sides ; and on both Sides might occasion some Expressions too strong and exaggerating.

HIS Friends argue from Experience, and what they had observed to be the usual Method of divine Providence. They had seen many Instances of wicked Men, or of those who had passed for such, remarkably punished ; and hence they formed to themselves
a general

a general Maxim, that where they saw great Wretchedness and Sufferings, there must be Crimes proportionably great. To this *Job* also opposes Observation and Experience; and shews, that the Rule of judging, they had formed to themselves, was by no Means right, or without Exception. That good Men were sometimes afflicted, and the wicked flourishing and happy; and that, for the most Part, things were dealt out here promiscuously. That this was more especially observable in times of War and Pestilence, and such other sweeping Calamities, where the good and bad fall undistinguished. *Chap. ix. 22, 23.* To all which he adds, that it was a very heavy Aggravation of his Misery, to hear his Friends, so well acquainted with him, Men of Sense and Distinction, charge him with Crimes which his Soul abhorred, and of which God, who had afflicted him, knew that he was innocent. To him he would appeal, and still adhere in Life and Death, though he did not know why he had dealt so severely with him. And so strongly did *Job* assert the Integrity of his Religion and Virtue, (*Chapters xxix. and xxxi.*) that his Friends, though perhaps not convinced, were however put to Silence. (*Chap. xxxii. 1.*)

UPON this, *Elihu*, a young Man of good Understanding, who, probably, with others, was a Bystander and Witness to this Debate,

(*Chap. xxxii. 15.*) acts as Moderator between *Job* and his Friends, and censures both very freely and judiciously ; only he charges *Job* with no Crime as the Cause of his Afflictions, but thinks he had not managed the Dispute about them with so much Calmness and Submission to God as became his Piety.

FINALLY, the Lord answered *Job* out of the *Whirlwind*, (the Septuagint add, *and Clouds*) a Token of the divine Presence. So *Ezekiel's* Visions were introduced, *Ezek. i. 4. And I looked, and behold, a Whirlwind came out of the North, a great Cloud and a Fire.* Perhaps, *Elibu* saw this Token of the divine Presence approaching. *Job xxxvii. 22, &c. Fair Weather* [זָהָב Gold, Splendor, the Splendor of the divine Presence. See *Schultens* in loc.] *cometh* [יָאֵתֵר will come, or is coming, speedily,] *out of the North ; with God is terrible Majesty.* The Speech of Deity, (*Chap. xxxviii. xxxix. xl. xli.*) most inimitably grand and sublime, representing the vast Extent of the divine Wisdom and Power in the Works of Creation, which *Job* and his Friends had well studied, and from which they knew how to deduce proper Conclusions, shews, 1. That all things in the Skie, the Air, the Earth, the Sea, are produced and disposed in a Manner far beyond the Reach of human Wisdom and Power. Consequently, 2. That Man is not qualified

qualified to dispose of himself, or of any other Being. That God may have wise and good Reasons for his Ways and Works, and Dealings with us, which we cannot comprehend ; and therefore it is our Duty, in all Cases, to acquiesce and submit. 3. That he who has given various Natures and Instincts to Animals, can give Being and Life, when and where, and in what Degree he pleases. 4. That he is present to, cares for, sustains and directs every living thing ; and therefore that we ought to trust in him for a happy Issue of any of his Inflictions. 5. That the wisest of Men should be very cautious and modest in censuring the Ways of Providence.

Chap. xlii. JOB humbleth himself before God, sacrificeth for his Friends ; his Family is restored, his Estate is doubled.

RULES to be observed in expounding the
Book of *Job*.

I. HE that would rightly explain this Book must, as much as he can, imagine himself in the same afflicted Condition.

II. EVERY daring Thought, or ardent Expression, which occurs in the Speeches of this afflicted, and exasperated Man, is not to be vindicated ; yet, as he was a great Man, and a Prince, he may be allowed to use bold and animated Language.

III. WE shall certainly judge amiss, if we think every thing wrong, which will not suit with the Politeness of our Manners. Allowance must be made for the Simplicity of those times.

IV. IN judging of *Job's* Character, we must set the noble Strains of his Piety against the unguarded Expressions of his Sorrow.

V. IT is not his Innocence, strictly speaking, which *Job* insists on, but his Sincerity. *Chap. vii. 20, 21.*

VI. EXCEPT their hard Censures of *Job*, his Friends speak well and religiously.

VII. HIS Friends encouraged *Job* to hope for a temporal Deliverance; (*Chap. v. 18, Ec. vii. 20, Ec. xi. 14, Ec.*) but *Job* despaired of it, and expected his bodily Disorder would terminate in Death, (*Chap. vi. 11, 12. vii. 6, 7, 8, 21. xvii. 1, 13, 14, 15. xix. 10.* Though, in the increasing Heat of the Dispute, they seem to drop this Sentiment, in their following Answers, as if they supposed *Job* to be too bad to hope for any Favor from God.) He hoped, however, that his Character would be cleared in the Day of Judgment; though he was greatly concerned that it could not be cleared before. That after a Life lead in the most conspicuous Virtues, his Reputation, in the Opinion of his nearest Friends, would set under a black Cloud; and, with regard to the ignorant and profane, leave an odious Reproach

proach upon a Profession of Religion. This touched him to the Heart ; exasperated all his Sufferings, and made him often wish, that God would bring him to his Trial here, in this Life ; that his Integrity might be vindicated, and all, Friends and Enemies, might understand the true End or Design of God in his Sufferings ; and the Honor of Religion might be secured. *Chap. x. ii. 2, 3. Is it good unto thee, that thou shouldst — shine upon the Counsel of the Wicked ?* who from my Case take Occasion to reproach and vilify true Religion, and to confirm themselves in their wicked and idolatrous Practices. *Chap. viii. 20, 21, 22. xi. 17—20. xvi. 9—11.*

VIII. HE could only affirm his Integrity, but could give no special satisfactory Reason, why God should afflict him in a Manner so very extraordinary, and beyond all preceding Cases, that were ever known in the World. This very much perplext and embarrass't his Mind, and laid him under a great Disadvantage in the Dispute. And, for one thing, it is on this Account that he is so earnest to come to a Conference with God, to know his Mind and Meaning. *Chap. x. 2. Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.* See Bp. PATRICK's Paraphrase upon the Place, from *Ver. 2^d* to the 8th. He knew very well he could not absolutely justify himself before God, *Chap. ix. 2, 3, &c. Ver. 17. For he breaks*

breaks me with a Tempest, he multiplieth my Wounds without Cause, or without any apparent Reason. Chap. vii. 12, 20. The whole xxxiii^d Chapter relates to this Point; in which he wishes he could come to the dwelling Place of God, (*Ver. 3.*) and spread his Case before him, and argue about it at large, (*Ver. 4.*) for he had turned his Thoughts every way, and could make nothing of it, (*Ver. 8, 9.*) only he was sure God knew he was an upright Man, (*Ver. 10, 11, 12.*) But, (*Ver. 13.*) *he is in one, באחד* or in Unity, supreme above all others, absolutely entire, keeping his Mind and Designs to himself, and none can turn, or oblige him to alter his Resolution. All that we can say is, that he doth whatever is agreeable to his own Wisdom. For (*Ver. 14.*) what he hath resolved to inflict upon me he hath accomplished; and many such things he doth, of which he will not give us the Reason. To the same Purpose understand *Chap. xxvii. 2, 3, 4, 14.* and *Chap. xxviii. 2.* *He hath taken away my Judgment*, i. e. the Rule by which I might judge of the Reason of my Afflictions. This Point, in Reference to God, *Eliku* tells him (*Chap. xxxiii. 13.*) he had urged to no Purpose, *seeing he gives no Account of his Matters*, or will not reveal to us the Secrets of his Providence.

IX. IN such a noble Performance, if any thing seems to be said not in Consistency,
or

or not in Character, we should rather suspect our own Judgment, than the good Sense of the Author. The Fault is not in the Book, but in our Understanding.

X. THAT Sense which best agrees with the Subject, or the Point in Hand, or which stands in the best Connection with the Context, should always be judged the best Sense.

C R I T I C I S M S.

Chap. i. 5. To bless a Person is a Form of Valediction, 2 Sam. xix. 39. So here, *My Sons have taken Leave of God.* And so 1 Kings xxi. 13. *Naboth hath bid Farewell to God and the King,* or hath treated them with Contempt.

Chap. iii. 25, 26. *THE thing that I greatly feared is come upon me, &c.* This alludes to the Loss of his Children, for whom he was very much concerned, Chap. i. 5. But Chap. xxix. 18. and xxx. 26. relate to his Circumstances in general.

Chap. xiii. 12. *YOUR Remembrances זְכָרֶיךָ your [quoting of] memorable Sayings are like Ashes, or Dirt; your Bodies גְּבִיֶּיךָ your Heaps, Eminencies, your strongest Arguments, to Heaps of Clay, soon washed away.*

C H A P. XXIV.

The Doctrines of the PATRIARCHAL AGE.

THE Instructions, particularly designed to be given in the Book of *Job*, might not be so well understood in that Age of the World; namely, that great Sufferings are not always an Argument of great Sins; but that very good Men may be very much afflicted in this World; that therefore we should not censure any under Calamities, be the Hand of God ever so apparent, unless the Crimes be likewise certain and apparent. That we ought not to complain of God in any Condition, as if he neglected us, or dealt hardly with us, but rather meekly submit to his blessed Will; who never doth any thing without Reason, though we cannot always comprehend it, adoring and revering the unsearchable Depths of his wise Counsel, and believing that all at last will turn out to our Advantage, if like his Servant *Job* we persevere in Faith, Hope, and Patience. This was *Job's* real Character, though not without Errors. No Error can be discerned in his Behaviour, but what the uncharitable Censures of his Friends provoked him to. Thus he was put upon too frequent and too strong Justifications of himself, being

ing withal extremely perplexed to give a plain and satisfactory Account, why God afflicted him so severely.

GOD, in the Issue, satisfied him, that he had just and weighty Reasons ; and, in particular, by doubling his Prosperity, that he designed to make him a Pattern of Patience and Reward. *James v. 11. Behold, we count them happy who endure patiently the greatest Sufferings. Ye have heard of the wonderful Patience of Job, and have seen, in his Case, the happy End to which the Lord brought his Calamities. Whence we may learn, that under the severest Visitations, the Lord is very compassionate and merciful to the sincere and upright, and will amply recompence them in a future World.*

THUS the great Point in Religion, before dark and doubtful, relating to the Providence of God, and the Sufferings of good Men, is cleared up with such Evidence, as can no where else be found but in the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*.

THOUGH this Point might not be so well understood, before it was thus illustrated, yet there are several other important Articles of Religion, of which *Job* and his Friends, and doubtless many others, had very just and clear Conceptions. As the Being and Perfections of God ; that we can receive neither Good nor Evil but from him, the Author of our Being, and Disposer of all Events ; that he sees and orders all things in
Heaven

Heaven and Earth ; that there can be no Iniquity with him ; that he is the Friend and Patron of Virtue, and hates, and will punish Vice and Wickedness ; nevertheless, that he is merciful and gracious, and will certainly pardon and bless those who sincerely repent of their Sins, and return unto him. That he is to be supremely revered and worshiped, as the sole Sovereign of the Universe, by Prayers and Sacrifices, by Purity and Integrity of Heart, by Justice in all our Dealings, by all acts of Charity, Goodness, and Benevolence to others, particularly, to the helpless and indigent ; by Temperance and Sobriety, curbing irregular Desires and Appetites ; that Men should not be elated and puffed up by large Possessions, nor put their Trust in Riches, *Chap. xxxi. 24, 25* ; that they should abhor Idolatry, *Ver. 26, 27, 28* ; that they should not wish Evil to an Enemy, nor rejoice in his Misfortunes, *Ver. 29, 30*, much less think of murdering him ; that they should abstain from Adultery and Fornication, *Ver. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11* ; from Theft, Rapin, and Deceit, *Ver. 5, 6, 7*. For the Punishment of which Crimes he mentions Judges in his Days, (*Ver. 11, 28.*) and was himself one of the chief, *Chap. xxix. 7, 9, &c.*

THESE, and such like Principles of natural Religion, are allowed both by *Job* and his Friends, and therefore were the Religion of the Patriarchs, as indeed they are the Principles

ciples of true and acceptable Religion in all Ages and Parts of the World.

FURTHER ; the religious in that, and the preceding, as well as subsequent Ages, I am persuaded, entertained the Faith and Hope of a future State. This hath been the popular Belief of all Nations from time immemorial ; and it is scarce credible, in the Nature of the thing, that the greatest Happiness of this Life, which might at any uncertain time, and at length would infallibly and totally be demolished by Death, should ever become a solid Principle of Religion, considered as the sole Reward of Piety and Virtue.

HOWEVER it appears, that *Job* expected a future World, for he had Hope with regard to his Condition, but not in this World ; therefore, his Hope must be in a future State. Chap. xiii. xv xvi. *הֲיֹדֵעַ יְקַטְלֵנִי לֹא־אֶחְיֶה* *Lo, or certainly, he will slay me : I will not hope, non est quod sperem, I have no ground to hope, that I shall survive my Sufferings, yet will I maintain the Integrity of my own Ways before him. And even this shall be for Salvation to me ; [where but in a future World ?] for a Hypocrite shall not come before him ; shall not have Confidence to present himself before his Tribunal. Chap. xxiii. 10. But he knows the Way that I take ; when he has tried me, I shall come forth as Gold. As Job absolutely despairs of any temporal Deliverance,*

ance, this must necessarily be understood of the Hope he entertained of having his Innocence cleared in the Day of Judgment.

HE had, moreover, a Notion of the Resurrection. Chap. xiv. 7. *For there is hope of a Tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender Branch thereof will not cease.* Ver. 8. *Though the Root thereof wax old in the Earth, and the Stock thereof die in the Ground,* Ver. 9. *yet through the Scent of Water it will bud, and bring forth Boughs like a new Plant.* Ver. 10. *And shall Man die, and totally waste away? And shall Man give up the ghost, and where is he? Or be no more for ever?* Ver. 11. *As the Waters fail from the Sea, as the Sea ebbs and flows again, and the River, or Brook in in the dry sandy Country of Arabia, decays, and drieth up, in Summer, but is made a Brook again by the Rains and Snows of Winter;* Ver. 12. *So Man lieth down, and riseth not, till the Heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their Sleep, to return to the Affairs and Possessions of this World.* Ver. 13. *And Oh that thou, O God, wouldst hide me in the Grave, in that State of Sleep and Insensibility, that thou wouldst keep me secret, in that silent Retirement, until thy Wrath be past; that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me to restore me to a new and better Life!* Ver. 14. *If a Man die, shall he live again?*
Or

Or shall a Man live again, after he is dead? Then I will patiently wait all the Days of the time thou shalt be pleased to appoint, till my happy Renovation shall come. Ver. 15. *Thou shalt call, and I will joyfully answer thee; thou wilt have a longing Desire to restore the Work of thy Hands.* Ver. 16. *Though now, at present, thou numbereſt my Steps, &c.*

CHAP. xix. 23. Observe the solemn Introduction; *Oh, that my Words, which I am going to speak, were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a Book!* Ver. 24. *That they were graven with an iron Pen and Lead, in the Rock* [my Grave-stone, SCHULTENS.] *for ever!* This is too grand for a temporal Deliverance. Why should that be recorded upon a Rock, as a lasting Monument to all Mankind? But it very well suits the noble and sublime Hope of a Resurrection and future Judgment, worthy of universal Attention. Ver. 25. *For I know, or am well assured, that my* לְבַדִּי *Vindicator, [the Vindicator of my Innocence is] living, and that at the last over the Dust, [the Dead, that have been reduced to Dust,] he shall arise, [to execute Judgment, Job xxxi. 13, 14. Psal. lxxiv. 22. lxxxii. 8. Verse 26. And though after my Skin they shall destroy this, [or this Body shall be destroyed,] yet from my restored Flesh I shall with Pleasure see God. [Vide R. חזק]* Verse 27. *Whom I shall see for myself, [to do me justice, as Chap. v. 27,*

—for thy good [for thyself] and mine Eyes shall behold; but וְאֵל אֲרָם a Stranger to Goodness and Justice shall not behold him in the same Manner. My Reins are consumed in my Bosom [in ardent Expectation of this glorious Event. N. B. נֶפֶשׁ יַעֲקֹב נִפְּשָׁה בְּלֵוָה vel רֹחַ דֶּסִּידֵרִיּוּם, ingens, flagrans et consumens significat; videfis Psalms lxxxiv. 2. cxix. 82, 123. clxiii. 7. Sic quoque de בְּלֵוָה renes, statuendum.] Observe — if after his Skin, his Body also was destroyed, how could he out-live this Destruction, so as to be a Man prosperous and happy again in this World? Had this been his fixed Belief, his frequent wishing for Death would be utterly unaccountable, and his tragical Complaints ridiculous, and his despair of Health and Happiness in this World a Contradiction.

IF wicked Men, though sometimes in great wretchedness, [Chap. xxi. 16, &c.] are also sometimes prosperous and powerful, Verse 7, &c. the proper Inference is, Verse 30. That the Wicked are reserved unto the Day of Destruction, and that they shall be brought forth to the Day of Wrath; not in this World, for that would have cut the Neck of Job's Argument at once, and have fallen in directly with that of his Friends. Chap. xxxi. 2, 3.

CHAP. xxvii. 8. FOR what is the Hope of an Hypocrite, in the future State, though he hath gained much in this World; when
 God

God takes away his Soul at Death? This supposeth a Hope after Death. — Again, Chap. xxxi. 13, 14. *What then shall I do when God riseth up to Judgment?* Not in this World, where his Sufferings were as great as could be, and where he did not expect they would be abated. — Lastly, his *Friends had not spoken of God the thing that was right*, as *Job* had done, Chap. xlii. 7, 8. But, setting aside a future State, the Friends would have spoke more worthily of God, by vindicating his Providence in the exact Distribution of Good and Evil in this Life; and *Job*, who asserted the contrary, would have misrepresented his Dealings with Mankind.

THE Patriarchs before and after *Job*, and the *Israelites* before *Christ* came, had a Notion of a future State. — By Sacrifices was plainly shewn, that a way was open to the divine Favor and Acceptance; and the Favor of God imports Happiness, which to *Abel*, who was for that very Reason, because he was accepted of God, unjustly slain, could be only in a future State. *Heb. xi. 4. Καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀποθανὼν and dying on account of that* his Faith *he yet speaketh* an invisible future State of Reward. — The Translation of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, in two distant Ages, were well known demonstrations of a future State of Reward and Glory. — They were certainly acquainted with God and Angels, and Heaven where both resided. *Gen. xxii. 11.* And the

Connection between this World and Heaven, by the Ministry of Angels, was clearly represented to *Jacob*. Genesis xxviii. 12. They must, therefore, have a Notion of another and better World.

THE Promise to *Abraham*, Genesis xvii. 7. *I will be a God unto thee*, we shall find is the same with the Gospel Promise, and therefore must include the Gift of eternal Life. And as that Promise was sure to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, when they were dead, (*Exodus* iii. 6.) our Lord rightly infers, that they would rise again. (*Luke* xx. 37, 38.) *For God is not a God of the dead, who cannot, as such, be benefited by him, but of the living; for though they are dead, they all live unto him, or with respect of him, as he will raise them all to Life again.*—And the Patriarchs thus understood this Promise; for when they considered and represented their Life in this World as a Pilgrimage, *Genesis* xlvii. 9. or a State of sojourning or traveling, they plainly intimated that they were seeking, *πατρίδα*, their Father's Country *i. e.* the heavenly Country or City. *Heb.* xi. 13 —16. Had the Prospects of *Moses* been confined to this World, doubtless he would have preferred the Pleasures and Honours of *Pharaoh's* Court; but by refusing them, and chusing rather to suffer with the People of God, he plainly indicated, that *he had respect*
to

to the future recompence of Reward. Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26.

IT is certain the *Jews*, even during their Peculiarity, were under the *Abrahamic*, or Gospel Covenant, promising the Pardon of Sin, and eternal Life, as well as under the Law, or *Sinai* Covenant. *Deut.* xxix. 12, 13. And surely, if they were admitted to a Covenant of Life and Immortality, they could not be ignorant of a future State. Nor can it be judged at all improbable, that *Moses* propounds eternal Life to them in such Passages as this, *Deut.* xxx. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thy Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayst live.* This our Lord understood of eternal Life. *Luke* x. 25, &c. When one asked him, *What shall I do to inherit eternal Life?* he sent him to the Law of *Moses*; and when the Enquirer readily quoted the Rule of Life given by *Moses*, our Lord replied, *Thou hast answered well; this do, and thou shalt live,* meaning eternally. Which leads us to understand *Moses* in the same Sense, when he proposes Life as the Reward of their sincere Religion, Virtue, and Goodness. *Deut.* xxx. 15, 19, 20. *Lev.* xviii. 5. compared with *Romans* x. 5. *Gal.* iii. 10, 11, 12. Indeed Life and Prosperity in the Land of *Canaan*, is intermixed with such Promises. This is to be considered as addressed to them

in a national Capacity, and with respect to the Covenant of Peculiarity. [Note—*Life* is put for eternal Life, *John* vi. 47, 48 52, 53, 58.] רֵאשִׁית is the Beginning, or former Part; אַחֲרֵית properly denotes, what comes after, the after Part, Time, or State. Thus *Job's* time, after his Afflictions were over, is called his *abharith*, Chap. xlii. 12. So is a Man's Posterity, or those that come after him in Being. *Amos* iv. 2.

SOMETIMES it signifies the happy Consequence; or Sequel of a Course of Action, *Proverbs* xxiv. 14, 20; frequently after-Days, or Times in this World; but is never used more properly than to denote a future State after Death. *Num.* xxiii. 10. *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my ahharith, my after, or future State, be like his.* Psalm lxxiii. 3—18. The wicked lived in Prosperity, and died an easy Death. *There are no Bands in their Death*, Verse 4. I envied them, saith David, Verse 17, until I went into the Sanctuary of God; then understood I their, ahharith, future State after Death. Surely thou hast set them in slippery Places; thou hast cast them down into eternal Destruction, &c. Verse 20. As a Dream after one is awake; so, O Lord, when thou awakest [בָּעֵיר in awaking them, or when they are awakened] thou wilt despise, [debase, pour contempt upon, *Daniel* xii. 2] their Image [צִלְמֵם their vain, shadowy, unsubstantial

stantial Condition.] Verse 23. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee*, [the Object of thy special Care.] Verse 24—27. *Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory, &c. Proverbs xxiii. 17, 18. Surely there is an End, ahharith, an after-state. Jer. xvii. 11. As the Bird Kore hatcheth Eggs, which she did not lay, so he that getteth Riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his Days, and at his End [ובאחריתו in his after—or future-state,] shall be נבל a Fool, vile, contemptible. Verse 13.—They that depart from me shall be written in the Earth, not registered in Heaven, in the Book of Life. Deut. xxxii. 29—their latter End, their after—or future-state. Psalm xxxvii. 37, 38.—the End, ahharith, of that Man is Peace, Happiness. But the Transgressors shall be utterly destroyed [where but in the future World?] the End, ahharith, of the wicked shall be cut off. Deut. xiv. 1, 2. Ye are the Children of the Lord your God; (of an immortal Father) ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any Baldness between your Eyes for the dead. They must not mourn as those that had no Hope, 1 Thes. iv. 13. Adoption includes the Redemption of the Body. Romans viii. 23.—Isaiah xxvi. 19. Thy dead Men shall live, with my dead Body shall they arise: awake, and sing ye that dwell in the Dust; for thy Dew is as the Dew of Herbs, which makes Herbs to spring*

and grow up. *But the Earth shall cast out the wicked dead, the Rephaim, as Abortives.*

SEE Psalms xv. xvi. 9, &c. xvii. 15.—*when I awake out of Death. Daniel xii. 2. Psalms xxiii. 6. xxiv. 3, 4, 5. Eccl. iii. 16, 17. xii. 13. Isaiah xxv. 8. li. 6.*

THESE Instances may satisfy, that, although Life and Immortality are brought into the fullest Light by the Gospel, a future State was not unknown from the Beginning to the Coming of *Christ*. We may therefore take it for a good Rule, that the Words, *Life and Salvation*, in the Old Testament, may be understood of a *future Life and Salvation*, when the Context will admit of such an Interpretation.

WE have found, that in the patriarchal Age, among the Nations, before the Jewish Peculiarity, there were Persons eminent for Religion and Virtue, who worshiped the living God, and enjoyed extraordinary Communications from him; but that many were of a different Character, wicked and ungodly Men; and that Idolatry, captivating the Minds of the ignorant, weak, and vicious, spread so fast, that it threatened the total Extinction of good Morals, and of the Knowledge and pure Worship of God. How the Father of Mankind counteracted this new Instance of Degeneracy we shall see, when we have settled the Scripture-Chronology, and considered the Judgment of God upon *Sodom and Gomorrah*.

C H A P. XXV.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY from the DE-
LUGE to the EXODUS. The Wickedness and
Ruin of SODOM, &c. 857 Years.

Year before Christ.	Year of the World.	Year of Shem's Age.	Proofs.	Names of the Patriarchs, and their Ages, when they had Sons.
2346	1658	100	Gen. xi. 10. - - - 12. - - - 14. - - - 16. - - - 18. - - - 20. - - - 22. - - - 24.	Shem, after the Fl. 2 and begat Arphaxad lived 35 and begat Salah lived 30 and begat Heber lived 34 and begat Peleg lived 30 and begat Ren lived 32 and begat Serug lived 30 and begat Nahor lived 29 and begat Terah lived 130 * and begat
1921	2083	525	- - - xii. 4.	Abraham 75 { when the Promise was made.
1706	2298	550	- - - xxi. 5. - - - xxv. 26.	After that 25 and begat Isaac lived 60 † and begat
1491	2513		- - - xlvii. 9.	Jacob aged 130 { when he re- moved into Egypt.
				Israelites conti- nued there. } 215

* *GEN.* xi. 26. it is said, that *Terab* lived 70 Years, and begat *Abram*, *Nabor*, and *Haran*. But *Terab* was 205 Years old when he died in *Haran*, *Gen.* xi. 32. After *Terab*'s Death, *Abram* left *Haran*; and then was he 75 Years old, *Gen.* xii. 4. which being subtracted from 205, *Terab*'s Age, gives 130, the Year of *Terab*, when *Abram* was born.

† Add *Isaac*'s Age (60) when *Jacob* was born, to the Years from the Deluge, and you will have 512, the Year after the Deluge when *Jacob* was born. *Shem* was 98 Years old at the Deluge, and lived 600 Years, *Gen.* xi. 10, 11. Take 98 from 600 and there remains 502, the Years *Shem* lived after the Deluge; which, deducted from 512, the Year after the Deluge, in which *Jacob* was born, leaves ten Years, the time between *Shem*'s Death and *Jacob*'s Birth. Hence it follows, that *Isaac* lived with *Shem* 50, and that *Abraham* lived with *Shem* 150 Years. *Isaac* also, who lived 180 Years, (*Gen.* xxxv. 28.) lived 120 with *Jacob*, i. e. till within ten Years of *Jacob*'s going down into *Egypt*. And as *Shem* lived with *Methuselah* 98, and *Methuselah* with *Adam* 240, three Persons, *Methuselah*, *Shem*, and *Isaac*, might bring down the Account of things from *Adam* till within ten Years of the going down of the *Israelites* into *Egypt*. From the Deluge to the Promise was 427 Years.

FROM

FROM the Promise to the time when *Jacob* and his Family went down into *Egypt* was 215 Years. And from the Promise to the time when the Children of *Israel* came out of *Egypt* was 430 Years. Compare *Exod.* xii. 41. with *Gal.* iii. 17. Therefore the time of their Continuance in *Egypt* must be 215 Years.

JOSEPH was 30 Years of Age when preferred by *Pharoah*, *Gen.* xli. 46. After that there were seven Years of Plenty, and two of Famine, (*Gen.* xlv. 11.) before *Jacob* came down into *Egypt*. *Joseph*, therefore, was then 39 Years of Age, after that he lived 71 Years, for he lived in all 110 Years, *Gen.* i. 22, 26. Take 71 out of 215, and there remains 144, the time the *Israelites* remained Slaves in *Egypt* after *Joseph's* Death. *Exod.* i. 8.

BEFORE we come to the Promise made to *Abraham*, which was the Foundation Stone of the grand Scheme to preserve Religion and Morals in the World, we must turn our Thoughts a while to a particular Dispensation, which God inflicted upon four Cities, *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, *Admah* and *Zeboim*, (*Gen.* xiv. 2. *Deut.* xxix. 23.) that stood in a very extensive, fruitful, and pleasant Vale, along the Sides of the River *Jordan*. *Gen.* xiii. 10. So far had Idolatry, and the Immorality which usually attends it, infected the World, that these four populous Cities,
and

and *Zoar*, which lay not far from them, (*Gen.* xiv. 2. xix. 20.) were become excessively debauched and wicked, indulging to that vilest sort of Lewdness, which is commonly called Sodomy, *going after strange Flesh*, (*Jude* 7.) *the Men burning in their Lust one towards another, Men with Men working that which is unseemly.* *Rom.* i. 27.

THEREFORE God purposed to punish them with an exemplary and total Destruction. *Abraham*, in the Benevolence of his Soul, interceded for their Preservation. *Gen.* xviii. 23. And such is the Mercy of God, so great his Regard to virtuous Characters, and so ready for their Sakes to bestow Blessings, even upon the unworthy, that he would have spared them, if but Ten truly sober and virtuous Persons could have been found in all those five Cities ; but they were universally and irreclaimably corrupt. Therefore, sparing *Zoar* for *Lot's* Sake, (*Gen.* xix. 20, 21.) he destroyed the other four Cities, with all their Inhabitants, by pouring upon them the most dreadful Storm of Fire and Brimstone from Heaven ; and also, probably, by a terrible Earthquake, that broke up the very Soil of the Earth, and by an Irruption of bituminous Waters, which turned the whole Vale into one heavy, fetid, and unwholsome Lake, called the *dead*, or *salt Sea*, about 30 Miles long, and 10 Miles broad, *Gen.* xix, 24, 25, which remains unto this Day.

THIS

THIS dreadful Instance of divine Vengeance, through the Mercy of God, removed the bad Examples of those daring Sinners, had a natural Fitness to awaken and reform the surviving Impious, and was very properly intended to remain a perpetual Monument of the Wrath of God upon the Wickedness of Mankind. 2 Pet. ii. 6. *Jude Ver. 7. Suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire.* Note — the Fire was *eternal*, as it totally and for ever destroyed those Cities never to be built again. God thus *revealed his future Wrath from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men.* And though there be no present Appearances of it, we should not therefore be secure. For, as our Lord observes, *Luke xvii. 28. The Sodomites did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, thoughtless and secure ; but the same Day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the Day that the Son of Man is revealed.*

Gen. xix. 24. *The LORD rained Fire and Brimstone from the LORD in Heaven.* This is an Hebraism, where the Noun itself is put instead of the personal Pronoun.

Gen. xix. 26. *But his Wife looked back from behind him, and she became a Pillar of Salt.* Note — The sulphureous Storm did not begin to fall upon Sodom, till Lot was
safely

safely arrived at *Zoar*, Gen. xix. 22. But his Wife looked back before he reached *Zoar* ; for she *looked back from behind him*, as he was going to *Zoar*. Therefore, when she looked back, *Sodom*, and the fine Country about it, appeared in the same pleasant and serene State as ever. Consequently, she looked with a Look of Affection to the Place, and of Regret to leave it, and their Goods that were in it, according to the Import of the Verb *וּנְבִיטָה* — This implied Unbelief and Distrust of what the Angels had affirmed, that God would immediately destroy the Place. She did not believe, or she did not regard it ; she stopt by the Way, and left her Husband to go by himself ; she would go no further, and might be at a considerable Distance from *Zoar*, and so near to *Sodom*, as, probably, to be involved in the terrible Shower, and thereby turned into a nitro-sulphureous Pillar. This gives the proper Sense and Force of our Lord's Admonition, *Luke* xvii. 32. *Remember Lot's Wife*. Let the Judgment of God upon her, warn you of the Folly and Danger of hankering after, and being lothe to part with small and temporal things, when your Life and Happiness, the greatest and most lasting Concerns, are at Stake.

C H A P. XXVI.

*The State of RELIGION in the World, when
God made the Promise to ABRAHAM.*

THOUGH we may be sure, that our State of Trial hath been, from the Beginning of the World, perfectly well adjusted, as to the proper Ballance of Means and Temptations, for all the Purposes of divine Wisdom and Goodness, yet it is certain that the Contagion of Evil so far spread in the earliest Ages, as, in Process of time, to threaten the total Extinction of true Religion and good Morals. This is evident in the Case of the old World, where Wickedness and Impiety had, at length, and by Degrees, infected the whole Race of Mankind, except *Noah's* single Family. And in about 450 Years after the Deluge, Idolatry and Wickedness had spread and corrupted the World so far, that *Sodom* and four other Cities, being universally debauched, were destroyed (one excepted for the Reason already given) by a most tremendous Judgment. The *Amorites*, and several other neighbouring Nations, were then filling up the Measure of their Iniquity; (*Gen. xv. 16, 19, 20, 21.*) which in about 400 Years after was quite full; and God, who might have

256 *The State of RELIGION in the World,*
have destroyed them, as he did *Sodom*, &c.
gave the *Israelites* a Commission to expel, or
extirpate them.

THIS spreading Corruption, after the De-
luge, is not to be assigned to simple Irre-
ligion, but to Religion directed to wrong
Objects and Purposes. While Men retained
the Knowledge of the true God, they cared
not to glorify him by the Practice of Virtue
and Holiness, nor were thankful for his Be-
nefits. *Rom. i. 21, 22.* And artful Men,
through Pride and Wantonness, indulging to
idle Conceits and false Reasonings, involved
their own Understanding, and that of others,
in the thickest Clouds of Error and Delusion.
Probably, they represented the heavenly Bo-
dies, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, as illustri-
ous Intelligences, who, being so eminently
exalted, must have the highest Interest in
the Favor of God, the Direction of human
Affairs, and the Distribution of all temporal
Blessings ; and therefore it would be sufficient
to all the Purposes of Religion, to secure their
Friendship, as Mediators between God and
them. Thus they might *be driven*, enticed,
drawn in, to worship them, (*Deut. iv. 19.*)
by such impious Rites as were invented by
the Folly and Ignorance of the same So-
phisters, and adapted to the depraved Minds
of such as listened to them. Thus they
might be deceived into the Practice of all
Manner of Lewdness and Vice. For the
Attributes

Attributes of those supposed Deities, and Benefactors of Mankind, being feigned purely by human Imagination, they would naturally be represented by Men, who had their own Interests and Lufts to serve, in such Manner as best suited the corrupt Taste and Inclinations of those who were disposed to follow them. If this was not the Case at first, it may easily be conceived to have been so in Process of Time, by after-improvements upon the original Scheme of Idolatry. And by this method Men would be lead to believe, they might be religious, and gain Health, long Life, fruitful Seasons, Plenty, Prosperity, not only without the Practice of Virtue and Holiness, but, positively, by lewd and wicked Practices; and thus Religion would be turned into an Encouragement to Vice, and the Principles of Virtue and Goodness would be extinguished.

Whether they were seduced precisely after this Manner or not, the Fact is certain, that their abominable Idolatries were attended with abominable Lufts and Intemperance. 1 *Pet.* iv. 3. Add to this, that cunning Men, who knew how to make their own Advantage of the Foibles of Mankind, introduced into their Minds Notions of Fate, Destiny, Fortune, Chance, Necessity, with many other Delusions. Hence arose Professors of the vilest Arts, pretending to look into Futurity, to gratify malicious Desires, to secure

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good,

good, and prevent bad Luck to those who consulted them. *Deut.* xviii. 10. *Diviners, Observers of Times, Inchanters, Witches,* or such as pretend to work upon the Mind, or Body, for evil Purposes, by Herbs or Potions; *Charmers, Consulters with a pretended familiar Spirit, Wizards, Necromancers.* And so far were they infatuated, that they made their Sons and Daughters to pass through the Fire, under the Notion of Sacrifices to their Idols; probably, to gain their Blessing upon their Children, and to make them healthy and fortunate. *Deut.* xii. 31. xviii. 10. *Lev.* xviii. 21. xx. 2. Thus their Hope and Trust, and their Regards were diverted from God and his Providence to vain Idols and the vilest Impostors.

THE Neglect and Abuse of Understanding, and the indulged irregular Inclinations of the Heart, were doubtless the Spring and principal Cause of this Defection from God and Virtue. But we may believe it was forwarded and compleated by the Suggestions and Instigations of the Devil and his Angels; *the Prince of the power of the Air, the Spirit whom God permits to work in the Children of Disobedience,* (*Ephes.* ii. 2.) and to deceive *the Nations.* *Rev.* xx. 2, 3. For when Men receive not the Love of the Truth, that they may be saved, God judicially sends them strong Delusion, that they may believe a Lie. That they may all be condemned, who believe not the Truth,

when God made the Promise to ABRAHAM. 259
Truth, but have Pleasure in Unrighteousness.
2 Theff. ii. 9—12.

THUS we see how Idolatry first began, and by what Means it might, as it certainly did, spread in the World ; and would have prevailed universally, as the remaining virtuous dropt off, and as Men of Understanding happened to be drawn in by various Allurements. For the Heart even of *Solomon*, the great and wise, was, by the Love of strange Women, so far turned away after Idol-Gods, that he built High-places and Altars in Honor of them, even in the Neighbourhood of the City *Jerusalem*. 1 Kin. xi. 1—8.

To prevent the universal Prevalence of Idolatry, and to preserve among Mankind the Knowledge and Worship of the living and true God, the wise and gracious Father of Men was pleased to advance a new and noble Scheme, which, under several Variations and Improvements, was to reach to the End of Time. The Scheme was this, to choose and adopt one Family, afterwards to be formed into a Nation, instructed in religious Knowledge by God himself, and favored with such extraordinary Privileges, and Honors, above all other Nations of the Earth, as were in their own Nature adapted to engage them, by the most rational Motives, to adhere to God and his Worship. At the same time, to prevent their being infected

with the Idolatries and Vices of the rest of the World, as they certainly would have been, had they mingled with them, they were to be distinguished and separated from all other People by their Diet, their Dress, and divers civil and religious Rites and Ceremonies ; but more particularly by a secret Mark in the Flesh, by which they might be certainly known from all other Men. Thus they would be kept together in a Body, and hindered from mixing with, and being corrupted by, their idolatrous Neighbours, and in every Respect fitted to be an Example and Instruction to them under the various Dispensations wherewith they were visited. And further, their Laws and religious Institutions being originally recorded in *Books*, would more certainly be preserved and known in all future Ages and Generations. Thus God provided a Store-house of religious Knowledge, a whole Nation of Priests, *Exod.* xix. 6. a School of Instruction and Wisdom for all the World. Or the Nation of *Israelites* may be considered as a Peice of Leaven which in Process of time was to leaven the whole Lump or Mass of Mankind.

ABRAHAM, a Person of the most eminent Piety and Virtue, was chosen to be the Head and Father of this Nation ; that, as he would always be held in great Veneration among them, he might always shine before their

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their Eyes as an illustrious Pattern of God-
liness.

THE Ground of this Scheme, and of God's singular Regards to *Abraham* and his Posterity, was the COVENANT OF GRACE, the PROMISE or Grant of Favors and Blessings to Mankind in *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Who verily was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World, though not manifested till the last Times.* 1 Pet. i. 20. This Covenant or Grant was first published to *Adam*. Gen. iii. 15. *Her, the Woman's, Seed shall bruise thy Head, O Serpent, and thou shalt bruise his Heel.* Nor could it be wholly unknown to the Patriarchs; but it was much more clearly revealed to *Abraham*. Gen. xii. 3. xvii. 7. xviii. 18. xxii. 16, 17, 18. And this is the Subject which now requires our particular Attention. [See the *Treatise on the Covenant of Grace, &c.*]

C H A P. XXVII.

The Methods of DIVINE WISDOM *in raising up a new and religious* NATION.

TO return to the Age in which *Abraham* lived. The Delusions of Idolatry were so strong, and the human Understanding so weak, that all Nations seem to have run into it at once and alike. And

such was the infatuating and spreading Nature of the Infection, that there was no rational Prospect of the Reformation of any one of them. Violence could not be used, Argument and Reasoning would have no Effect, the most dreadful Judgments were forgotten, or disregarded.* The Knowledge and Worship of the one living and true God, the great Principle of moral Goodness, and of publick and private Happiness, would have been totally lost in the Earth. But the Father and Governor of Men provided a Remedy. Instead of destroying all Nations, as at the Deluge, it was the merciful Scheme of divine Wisdom to create, out of one pious and faithful Person, *Abraham*, a new and religious Nation, separated from all the rest, in order to ascertain among them, and at length among all Nations, right Sentiments of his Being, Perfections, and Providence. And it is greatly worth our while to observe the Steps and Methods by which God was pleased to train them up for this Purpose.

FIRST, *Abraham* is required to cast himself wholly upon 'God's Providence, by removing, at God's Command, from his own Kindred and Country, to an unknown distant Land, which God would shew him; assuring him of his Presence and special Blessing.

* Reckoning by the Age of Man, the World was 20 Years old; for God called *Abraham* in the Year of the World 2083.

Blessing. *Genesis* xii. 1, 2, 3. Thus *God* took him under his immediate Care and Protection. In this strange Land he wandered about as long as he lived, but *God* was with him every where. *God* appeared to him, and conversed with him frequently and familiarly. By extraordinary Interpositions, and express Declarations from time to time *God* encouraged, directed, prospered, guarded and provided for him. He became very rich, great, and honourable; but all was most visibly the Gift and Operation of *God*. *God* gave him repeated Assurances, that he would make of him a great Nation, give his Posterity the whole Land of *Canaan*, and that in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed. But he was not to have a Son, till the Birth of that Son was manifestly the extraordinary miraculous Effect of divine Power, and insured the Performance of the Promises. What could be more ingaging than all these Circumstances? What more proper to excite in a Man, Duty, Affection, and Confidence towards *God*? The same Encouragements, Blessings, and Promises are repeated to *Isaac*, and afterwards to *Jacob*, and the same heavenly Correspondence is kept open with them during their Lives. *Egypt*, then a plentiful Country, of Genius and Learning, [*Acts* vii. 22.] the Resort of the curious and inquisitive, was chosen to be the Nursery of this Family. Thither was

Joseph first carried by a singular Providence, sold for a Slave, and most unjustly cast into Prison, but only that *God* might shew himself in his Enlargement. By Means which *God* only could provide and direct, he was at once released from a Jail, and raised to almost regal Honor and Authority. And in high Dignity and Esteem, and with astonishing Success, which none but *God* could give, in the most important Affairs, he continued all the Days of his Life.

By him *God* predicted Seven Years of prodigious Plenty in *Egypt*, and Seven succeeding Years of the most distressing Famine in the Land, and in all the adjacent Countries. By this Event, *Jacob's* whole Family, in all Seventy Two Souls, were brought to reside, with the great good-will of the King, and of the whole Nation, in *Goshen*, the richest Province in the Land of *Egypt*, Gen. xlvii. 6. where their Situation, Manners, and way of living would keep them separate from their idolatrous Neighbours. Gen. xliii. 32. xli. 34. Thus *God*, by a surprising Train of Events, introduced the Family of *Abraham* into the Nursery, where they were to grow up into a Nation. At length a Prince arose, who knew, or regarded, not *Joseph*, Exodus i. 8. Then they fell into a State of Slavery, and the severest Oppression and Suffering, for about 140 Years. But this was only to render the Power of *God* more conspicuous
in

in their Preservation and Deliverance. The more they are oppressed, and the more cruelly they were used, the more they increase and flourish, till they were numerous enough to be formed into a Nation. Then *Moses* was miraculously preserved, educated by *Pharaoh's* Daughter in all the Wisdom of the *Egyptians*, and raised up to be their Deliverer. And now the Vials of divine Wrath are poured out one after another upon *Egypt*. God made bare his Arm, or gave the most signal and striking Demonstrations of his Being and Power, infinitely superior not only to all human Strength, but also to all the pretended Deities, in which the *Egyptians* trusted. *Exodus* xii. 12.

To this End (1.) the divine Wisdom permitted, on this special Occasion, *Pharaoh's* Magicians, possibly by the Ministry of evil Spirits, or by extraordinary Powers immediately communicated to the Enchanters, to imitate some of the Miracles which *Moses* wrought, in order to display more clearly his own divine Power; and to convince both *Egyptians* and *Israelites* of the Vanity of such Arts, by controlling and defeating them, even when exercised in the highest Degree. So a Man was born blind, and *Lazarus* died, on Purpose to give our Lord an Opportunity of demonstrating his Power, and the Truth of his Mission. *John* ix. 3. xi. 4. And for that Reason, an
extra-

extraordinary Power might be permitted to evil Spirits to possess the Bodies of Men, that our Saviour's Dominion over the Devil and his Angels might be more evidently shewn. The invisible World of Spirits may undergo many Variations, and be subject to different Restraints and Regulations in different Ages, so as to interfere more or less, or not at all in human Affairs. *Jortin.*

(2.) God hardened *Pharaoh's* Heart, by granting him Respite from one Plague after another, that he might multiply, and so render more conspicuous, the Demonstrations of his Being and supreme Dominion. And this is all that God did towards hardening *Pharaoh's* Heart. See *Exodus* viii. 15. ix. 34, 35, and Verse 15, 16. *For now, saith the Lord, I have stretched out my Hand [in the preceding Plague of Boils and Blains,] and I have smitten thee, and thy People, with the Pestilence, and [by this Plague] thou mightest have been cut off from the Earth. But in very Deed for this Cause I have raised thee up, [I have restored thee to Health, by removing the pestilential Boils,] that by respiting thy Destruction, I may shew in thee more and greater Proofs of my almighty Power.*

ALL the Miracles, which God wrought in *Egypt*, were such as must be seen and acknowledged to come from him alone, and not from any possible Power of Man, or from any natural Accidents. This is true
of

of all the Ten Plagues, but especially of the last. The Pestilence, in ordinary Cases, sweeps away Multitudes promiscuously, but when it singlenth out only the First-born in every Family, it must plainly appear to be a Judgment immediately from the Hand or Direction of God; [*Exodus* xii. 29.] as it was to the *Israelites* a just Retribution of the Cruelty of the *Egyptians* in endeavouring to destroy all their male Children. *Exodus* i. 16. [Note—In those Ages and Circumstances of the World, when Men were not so capable of being convinced by abstract Reasoning, and probably understood nothing of the Perfections of God *a priori*, his supreme Authority and Omnipotence would be best demonstrated by *Facts*, which experimentally proved his uncontroled Dominion over all other Powers, and over universal Nature.] At last *Pharaoh* and his People give up the Cause. God's superior Power is owned, because so dreadfully experienced. The *Egyptians* urge them to depart, and to remove all Objections that might hinder their Departure, willingly give them the most precious and valuable of their Possessions, [which, by the way, might be but equal Payment for the Labor of so great a Multitude, for 140. Years.] See *Exodus* xii. 33, &c. Verse 35. *And the Children of Israel—יִשְׂרָאֵל asked of the Egyptians Jewels, &c. i. e. asked the Egyptians to give them Jewels, &c. [יָשָׁא signifies*

nifies to *ask to give*, as well as to *lend*. Josh. xv. 18, 19. xix. 50. *Jud.* v. 25. viii. 25, 26. *Psal.* ii. 8. See Hebrew English Concordance.] Verse 36. *So that they lent unto them, &c.* † So that they readily gave them, &c. ~~Encourage~~ in *Hiphkid* to make to ask, i. e. to encourage, to gratify asking by freely giving. [Note—Upon the Occasion of the Death of all the First-born among the *Egyptians*, and the Departure of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, a commemorative Festival, the *Passover*, is instituted; an Ordinance very proper for preserving the perpetual Memory of the Power and Goodness of God among the *Israelites*.]

THE *Israelites* leave *Egypt*, in Number no less than Twenty Four Hundred Thousand, *Num.* i. 45, 46, and all Nature giveth way before them. A Passage is open for them through the Red-sea, which closes upon, and overwhelms *Pharaoh* and his pursuing Army. Pillars of Cloud and Fire, alternately appearing in the Air, direct their March. Bitter Fountains are made sweet. In a dry, thirsty, barren Country they are supplied with Water from the hard and flinty Rock, and with Food from the Sky for Forty Years together. With all the Appearances of Glory and dreadful Majesty, God, as their King and Sovereign, established his Covenant, or entered into a solemn Contract, with them in Mount *Horeb*; chusing them for a *peculiar*
Treasure

Treasure above all People, Exodus xix. 5. and ingaging himself to be their God and King, and to bestow on them all national Blessings upon Condition they were obedient, adhered to his Worship, and kept clear of Idolatry, with which they had been tinctured in *Egypt*, (Lev. xvii. 7. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 8.) otherwise they might expect the severest Judgments. *Deut*, xxix. 10, &c. At the same time he gave them a System of Laws and Statutes, most excellent in themselves, fitted to their present Temper and Circumstances, as well as to the future Intents and Purposes of the Gospel Dispensation. Here God took up his Residence among them in the Tabernacle, afterwards in the Temple, setting himself at the Head of their Affairs, and upon all important Occasions directing them as an Oracle. And all this to attach and unite this one Nation to himself.

AT length, through a Train of very striking Miracles, (*Jordan* divided, the Walls of *Jericho* thrown down) he brought them into the promised Land, with a Commission to destroy all the Inhabitants, the Measure of whose Iniquity was then full; and, who probably were more corrupt than any of their Neighbours, and as deserving of Destruction as *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, for all the Idolatrous, brutish, cruel, incestuous, and unnatural Crimes, which universally prevailed
amongst

amongst them. Had the *Israelites* been mixed with the idolatrous *Canaanites* they would soon have lost the Knowledge of God, and been involved in all their Corruptions; but being made the Instruments of their Destruction, this would give them the greater Horror of those Crimes, which they knew (for *Moses* had told them, *Deut.* ix. 4, 5.) were thus dreadfully avenged by their Arms. Moreover, thus they would give themselves a clear Demonstration, that Idol-Gods had no Power to defend and preserve their Votaries. Therefore it was not unjust in God to command the Destruction of the *Canaanites*, nor cruel in his Servants to execute that Command, (any more than it is to extirpate Outlaws, and the worst of Criminals, by legal Authority) but in the Views of divine Wisdom, the properest Way of extirpating them, considering the Effects it would have upon the Minds of the *Israelites*.

HERE we may observe, (1.) that the *Israelites* made no Claim to the Land of *Canaan* in their own Right. The Right was in God, who gave it them. (2.) We may observe a good Reason why the divine Wisdom erected this Scheme for preserving true Religion, only in the one Nation of the *Israelites*. Because had he selected a pious Person, and his Family, as he selected *Abraham*, and his Posterity, out of every Nation upon Earth, then to make room for them,

every

every Nation upon Earth must have been devoted to Destruction, as the *Canaanites* were. But seeing the whole Earth was not filled with Violence, Injustice, Rapine and Oppression, God in much Lenity and Forbearance was pleased to *wink at*, or overlook, the Ignorance and Error of other Nations, without punishing them as they deserved, *Acts* xvii. 30; leaving them to the Light of Nature, *Acts* xiv. 16, to feel, or grope after his Existence and Perfections, *Acts* xvii. 26, 27; and to the Dictates of Conscience, for their Conduct in Life; while he continued his providential Care in giving the Supplies of Life, and visiting them with suitable Dispensations; and will, at last, judge them in perfect Equity, making Allowance for all unavoidable Defects. *Rom.* ii. 6, 10, 11, 12.

EVEN after the *Israelites* were settled in the Land, the Danger of Idolatry was not over. They were ready on every Occasion to catch the Infection from their Neighbours; and still there was need of further divine Interpositions. And through a long Course of Years they were exercised with various Dispensations, according as they did or did not adhere to the Worship of God. When they clave unto the Lord, they were prosperous and triumphant; when they forsook him, and followed strange Gods, they were in great Distress, in Servitude, and Captivity;
till

till by repeated Calamities, and signal Deliverances, accompanied with the clearer Light, and more rational Convictions, which, at length, they were prepared to receive from their Prophets, they were at last weaned from Idolatry, after the Babylonish Captivity, about 955 Years after their Return out of *Egypt*; and never relapsed into it again.*

ALL this was necessary, and in Consistence with human Agency, and the gradual Improvements of Mankind; was the properest Method to preserve the Knowledge of the true God in the World, not only in that single Nation, but in all the Nations of the Earth. For the Dispensation among the *Jews*, like a Piece of Leaven, which leaveneth the whole Mass, was intended for the Benefit of all Mankind; as by this Means they became Examples and Instructors, while they remained in their own Country, to all their Neighbours; and when in Captivity, or Dispersion, as they carried with them the Knowledge of God into the Countries where they were dispersed; till the Nations should, by this and other Means of Improvement, be prepared to receive the clearest Revelation of the true God, and of eternal Life by the *Messiah*. Which was the

* Reckoning by the Age of Man, the World was then 34 Years old; for the *Jews* returned from the *Babylonish* Captivity about the Year of the World 3468.

the great End and Design of the Scheme, which we have been considering.

AND now, the more a thinking Man resolves in his Mind this Train of Affairs, and sees how one Nation are led, step by step, as their Capacities would admit, to a Sense of the Pre-eminence and Sovereignty of the true God, in order to be set apart as the Repository of his sacred Laws and Religion, till they and all Mankind are fit for the Reception of them in a more simple, clear, and extensive Form, under the Gospel, the more he will confess and admire the Signatures of Wisdom and Goodness that appear through the whole and every Part of the Oeconomy.

THERE is one thing deserves particular Attention, I mean, the Spirit and Behaviour of the *Israelites* in the Wilderiness. A very remarkable Instance of the wretched Effects of Servitude upon the human Soul. They had been Slaves to the *Egyptians* for about 140 Year; their Spirits were debased, their Judgments weak, their Sense of God and Religion very low; they were very defective in Attention, Gratitude, Generosity; full of Distrust and uneasy Suspicions; complaining and murmuring under the most astonishing Displays of divine Power and Goodness, as if still under the Frowns and Scourges of their unjust Task-Masters; could scarce raise their Thoughts to Prospects the most pleasing and joyous; knew not how to

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value

value the Blessings of Liberty; of a Taste so mean and illiberal, that the Flesh and Fish, the Cucumbers, the Melons, the Leeks, Onions and Garlick, and such good Doings in *Egypt*, weighed more with them than Bread from Heaven, and all the divine Assurances and Demonstrations, that they should be raised to the noblest Privileges, the highest Honor and Felicity, as a peculiar Treasure to God, above all People in the World. *Num. xi. 4, 5, 6.*

IN short, nothing would do; the ill Qualities of Slavery were engrained in their Hearts; a groveling, thoughtless, sturdy, dastardly Spirit fatigued the divine Patience, counteracted and defeated all his wise and beneficent Measures; they could not be worked up to that Sense of God, that Esteem of his highest Favors, that Gratitude and generous Dutifulness, that Magnanimity of Spirit, which were necessary to their conquering and enjoying the promised Land. And therefore the Wisdom of God determined, they should not attempt the Possession of it, till that Generation of Slaves, namely, all above 20 Years of Age, were dead and buried. However, this did not lie out of the divine Plan. It served a great Purpose, namely, to warn that, and all future Ages of the Church, both *Jewish* and Christian, that if they despise and abuse the Goodness of God, and the noble Privileges and Prospects

Prospects they enjoy, they shall forfeit the Benefit of them. And the Apostle applieth it to this very important Use, with great Force and Propriety, in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. iii. Ver. 15, to the End, and Chap. iv. Ver. 1—12.

THUS, for a general View of this noble Scheme. The Nature and Excellency of it will stand in a stronger Light, if we examine the particular Privileges and Honors conferred upon this distinguished Nation, their Tendency to promote Piety and Virtue, and the Relation they bear to the State of things under the Gospel. For this Part of the Subject we must turn to my *Key to the Apostolic Writings*.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Of the Jewish RITUAL, or Ceremonial LAW.

WE must now turn back to the *mosaic* Constitution; which consisted, 1. Of political and judicial Laws. For which consult Mr. LOWMAN on *The Civil Government of the Hebrews*. 2. Of moral Precepts, such as the Ten Commandments. 3. Of Rites and Ceremonies, such as Circumcision, Sacrifices, Washings, Purifications, the Use of certain Garments, &c. and divers Rites used by the Priests in the Tabernacle.

For a particular Account of which, consult Mr. LOWMAN *on the Ritual of the Hebrew Worship*. I shall only observe in general, that the Design of those Ceremonies, justly explained, was to convey religious and moral Instructions, as well as the express Precepts.

HIEROGLYPHICS, *which represent the Sense of the Mind, by outward Figures, or Actions*, were the first and most ancient Literature. So the Government of the World by divine Providence, and its extraordinary Interposition in Favor of good Men, is represented by a Ladder standing upon the Earth, and reaching to Heaven, with the Angels ascending and descending on it, to receive and execute Orders from God above, who ruleth over all. *Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.* In the Style of this *Hieroglyphic* our Lord speaks, *John i. 51. Hereafter shall you see Heaven open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, as upon Jacob*; meaning you shall see an extraordinary divine Interposition working in my Favor, by many miraculous Operations. [Dr. BENSON] The Exaltation of *Joseph* above the rest of the Family, was represented by the Hieroglyphic of his Sheaf standing upright, and the eleven Sheaves of his Brothers standing round about and bowing to it. As also of the Sun, Moon, and eleven Stars making Obeysance to him. *Gen. xxxvii. 7, 9.* The Tribe of
Judah

Judah is represented by a young Lion; *Issachar* by a strong Ass; *Dan* by a Serpent lurking in the Road; *Naphtali* by a Hind; *Joseph* by a fruitful Bough; *Benjamin* by a ravening Wolf. *Gen.* xlix. 9, 14, &c. A Rod, or Staff, as it is an Instrument of striking or beating down, is the Hieroglyphic of Power exerted in conquering, punishing, ruling, *Isaiah* x. 5, 24; and of Dominion and Authority, *Psal.* cx. 2; and as such, is continued to this Day, under the Name of a Sceptre. With such a Rod *Moses* and *Aaron* appeared before *Pharaoh*, as hieroglyphically representing the Power and Authority of God, in whose Name they demanded the Release of the *Israelites*. *Exod.* vii. 15. And thus they appeared as Men of Learning, and acted agreeably to the Literature of the Age. A Horn represented temporal Power and Dominion. *1 Sam.* ii. 10. *1 Kin.* xxii. 11. *Psal.* lxxxix. 24. A Yoke, such as Slaves carried upon their Shoulders, Servitude, or Bondage, *Gen.* xxvii. 37, 40. *Jer.* xxvii. 2, 6. xxviii. 10.

THIS may serve to explain the Nature of Hieroglyphics; a Sort of Language the *Jews* were then accustomed to, being the Learning of that Age, which they would understand much better than abstract Reasonings about moral Truths and Duties. We may therefore, on this Account, well admit, that the Rites and Ceremonies of their religious

Institution were hieroglyphic, and intended by external Representations to give them useful Instructions in true Religion and real Goodness. If we consult the Prophets and Apostles, who were well acquainted with their Meaning, we shall find so much Evidence of the moral and spiritual Intention of so many, as may induce us to believe, this was the Sense and Spirit of all the rest.

THEY were enjoined various and frequent Ablutions, or Washings with Water; the common Use of which is to discharge the Body from all Dirt and Filth, and to keep it clean. This was a very easy Representation of Purity of Mind, or of an Heart purged from the Filth of Sin. And so the Prophets understood it. *Psal. li. 2. Wash me from mine Iniquity. Ver. 7. Wash me, and I shall be clean. Isai. i. 16. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, put away the evil of your Doings. — Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Jer. iv. 14. Acts xxii. 16. Heb. x. 22. Rev. i. 5. Anointing with Oil, or Ointment, by which the Head was beautified, and the Countenance exhilarated, had the Signification of Honor, Joy, Holiness, and Inspiration, Psal. xlv. 7. Acts x. 38. The Priests officiated in Garments of fine Linen, Exod. xxxix. 27; meaning, that the Priests should be clothed, or have their Souls adorned with Righteousness, Psal. cxxxii. 9. For the fine Linen is the Righteousness*

teousness of Saints. Rev. xix. 8. Burning of Incense, whose Smoak riseth up with a pleasant Smell, was an hieroglyphic Representation of acceptable Prayer. *Psal.* cxli. 2. *Luke* i. 10. Rev. viii. 3, 4. Circumcision had Relation to the Heart and Soul, or to the retrenching all inordinate Affections and Inclinations. *Lev.* xxvi. 41. *Deut.* x. 12—17. xxx. 6. *Jer.* iv. 4. *Rom.* ii. 29. The Sprinkling of Blood, and of the Water of Separation (*Num.* xix. 13, 19.) was hieroglyphic, and had a moral Signification. See *Heb.* ix. 13, 14. x. 22. xii. 24. *1 Pet.* i. 2. And so had the muzzled Mouth of the Ox. *Deut.* xxv. 4. compared with *1 Cor.* ix. 9, 10. *1 Tim.* v. 17, 18.

SOME may have indulged too much to Imagination, and found more Mysteries in the Hebrew Ritual than were really designed; but these Instances, explained by authentic Evidence, may convince us, that the whole had a rational and spiritual Meaning. And as we are taught in the Gospel every thing relating to Virtue and Religion in the plainest Manner, we need not give ourselves much Trouble about discovering the Meaning of the other Rites, which are not explained by Prophets and Apostles. Only the Affair of Sacrifices is so often alluded to in the New Testament, and seems to have such Respect to the Sacrifice of our Lord, that it demands a more particular Examination. [Turn to the *Scripture-Doctrine of Atonement.*]

C H A P. XXIX.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the*
EXODUS to the Founding of SOLOMON'S
Temple.

THIS Space of Time was 480 Years ;
 as appears from 1 *Kings* vi. 1. which
 is made out, in the best Manner I have yet
 seen, as follows.

Years be- fore Christ		Years	Proofs
1451	From the <i>Exodus</i> to the Death of <i>Moses</i> , and Suc- cession of <i>Joshua</i> . Note — <i>Moses</i> was 40 Years old, when he fled out of <i>Egypt</i> , <i>Acts</i> vii. 23. He was 40 Years with <i>Jethro</i> , <i>Exod.</i> vii. 7 ; and 40 Years in the Wilderness with the <i>Is- raelites</i> . Therefore, he was 120 when he died. <i>Deut.</i> xxxiv. 7.	40	<i>Exod.</i> vii. 7. <i>Acts</i> vii. 30.
1426	From the Succession of <i>Jo- shua</i> to his Death. Note — After the Death of <i>Joshua</i> the <i>Israelites</i> fell into Idolatry, <i>Judg.</i> ii. 7, &c. And in those licentious times, about the Year before Christ 1398, the Events, re- corded in the xvii th and xviii th Chapters of the Book	25	<i>Josephus</i> .

Years before Christ		Years	Proofs
	Book of <i>Judges</i> , by which Idolatry was introduced into the Tribe of <i>Ephraim</i> , and by that Means propagated among the <i>Danites</i> , might happen. For it was in the times when <i>there was no King in Israel</i> . And in the same unhappy Period fell out, most probably, the War of the eleven Tribes against <i>Benjamin</i> , of which we read <i>Judg.</i> xix. xx. xxi. Chapters. For <i>Phineas</i> , the Son of <i>Eleazar</i> , (<i>Josh.</i> xxiv. 33. 1 <i>Chron.</i> vi. 4.) who after the Death of <i>Joshua</i> succeeded his Father, about the Year before Christ 1402, was then High-Priest, <i>Judg.</i> xx. 28. And in those Days also <i>there was no King in Israel</i> , Chap. xxi. 25. which shews it was in the same times with the preceding Events.		
1391	From the Death of <i>Joshua</i> to the Bondage of East- <i>Israel</i> under <i>Cushan</i> .	35	<i>Judg.</i> iii. 8,
1383	To their Deliverance by <i>Othniel</i> .	8	. . 9, 10, 11,
1343	To the Bondage of East- <i>Israel</i> under <i>Eglon</i> King of <i>Moab</i> .	40	. . 12, 13, 14,
1325	To their Deliverance by <i>Ehud</i> . [After which, that Part of <i>Israel</i> had Rest for 80 Years, <i>Judg.</i> iii. 30.] Note — It may probably be supposed, that scarce	18	. . . 15—30.

Years be- fore Christ		Years	Proofs
	scarce any of the Judges ruled over the whole Country of <i>Israel</i> , but some in one Part, and some in another; so that, at the same time, there might be several Judges in several Parts of the Land; and Peace and Liberty in one Part, when there was War and Slavery in another. The eastern Part, that had shaken off the Yoke of <i>Moab</i> , had rest 80 Years; but, in the mean while, the <i>Philistines</i> invaded the western Parts, and were repulsed by <i>Shamgar</i> , <i>Judg.</i> iii. 31. Afterward <i>Jabin</i> afflicted the northern Tribes, <i>Chap.</i> iv. 2. while the eastern Parts still remained in Peace. See Bp. PATRICK on <i>Judg.</i> xi. 26.		
1285	To the Deliverance of North- <i>Israel</i> from <i>Jabin</i> , by <i>Deborah</i> and <i>Baruck</i> [After which that Part of the Land had Rest 40 Years. <i>Judg.</i> v. 31.]	40	Authority of Chronologers
1245	To the Bondage of North and East- <i>Israel</i> under the <i>Midianites</i> , for 7 Years. Note—In some of those 7 Years, probably, <i>Eli-melech</i> removed into the Land of <i>Moab</i> , by Reason of the Famine, occasioned by the Depredations	40	<i>Judg.</i> vi. 1.

Years be fore Christ		Years	Proofs
	datations of the <i>Midianites</i> , <i>Ruth</i> i. 1, 2. <i>Judg.</i> vi. 4.		
1238	To their Deliverance by <i>Gideon</i> .	7	<i>Jud.</i> vi. 1, &c.
1199	To <i>Abimelech's</i> Usurpation, 40 Years, or 39 compleat.	39	... viii. 28.
1196	To <i>Tola</i> , Judge over North and East- <i>Israel</i> .	3	... ix. 22.
1173	To <i>Jair</i> , Judge over North and East- <i>Israel</i> .	23	... x. 1, 2.
	Note — While <i>Jair</i> was Judge, North and East- <i>Israel</i> were in Bondage to the <i>Ammonites</i> 18 Years, <i>Judg.</i> x. 8. At the same time with <i>Jair</i> , <i>Eli</i> be- gan to judge South and West- <i>Israel</i> 40 Years, 1 <i>Sam.</i> iv. 18 ; all which time that Part of <i>Israel</i> was oppress'd by the <i>Phi- listines</i> , <i>Judg.</i> xiii. 1. In the first of those 40 Years of <i>Eli</i> , which was also the first Year of <i>Jair</i> , <i>Samson</i> might be born ; who lived 40 Years, and judged West- <i>Israel</i> , (while <i>Eli</i> also was Judge there, and while that Part of the Country was under the <i>Philistines</i> ,) 20 Years, <i>Judg.</i> xv. 20. [<i>Eli</i> judg- ing in civil Affairs; <i>Sam- son</i> by harrassing the <i>Phi- listines</i> . <i>USHER.</i>] About the 13 th Year of <i>Eli</i> , be- fore Christ 1160, <i>Samuel</i> might be born.		
1152	From <i>Jair</i> to <i>Jephthah</i> , who delivered North and East <i>Israel</i> from the <i>Ammonites</i> ,		

Years be- fore Christ		Years	Proofs
	<i>Ammonites</i> , 22, or 21 complete Years.	21	<i>Judg.</i> x. 3.
1147	From <i>Jephthah</i> to <i>Ibzan</i> , over North and East- <i>Israel</i> , six, or five com- pleat Years.	5 xii. 7.
1140	From <i>Ibzan</i> to his Succes- sor <i>Elon</i> , in North and East- <i>Israel</i> .	7 9.
1135	About the fifth Year of <i>Elon</i> , <i>Samuel</i> was pub- lickly known to be a Pro- phet, 1 <i>Sam.</i> iii. 20. iv.		
1133	1. About the seventh of <i>Elon</i> , <i>Samson</i> pulled down the Temple, <i>Judg.</i> xvi. 30. and destroyed great Numbers of the <i>Philis- tines</i> . <i>USHER</i> thinks, that this Calamity might en- courage the South and West- <i>Israelites</i> to give them Battle. 1 <i>Sam.</i> iv. 1, &c.		
1130	From <i>Elon</i> to <i>Abdon</i> , over North and East- <i>Israel</i> .	10	<i>Judg.</i> xii. 11.
1122	From <i>Abdon</i> to his Successor <i>Samuel</i> , who now was also Judge over North and East- <i>Israel</i> , as he had been before over South and West- <i>Israel</i> , 1 <i>Sam.</i> vii. 15, 16, 17. proba- bly, from the time that he was publickly known to be a Prophet.	8 14.
1094	From <i>Samuel</i> to King <i>Saul</i> .	28	<i>Chronologers</i>
1054	From <i>Saul</i> to <i>David</i> .	40	<i>Acts</i> xiii. 21.
1014	From <i>David</i> to <i>Solomon</i> .	40	1 <i>Kings</i> ii. 11.
	From <i>Solomon</i> to the Found- ing of the Temple, four, or three complete Years.	3 vi. 1.

In all . . 480 1 *Kings* vi. 1.

C H A P. XXX.

*Authors within the Period from the Exodus
to the Founding of SOLOMON's Temple.*

ABOUT the Begining of this Period Books began to be written ; and it hath furnished the World with the noblest Productions both in History, Poetry, and the instructive kind.

The Book of J O B.

If *Job* wrote his own Book ; or if it was written by *Elibu*, one of the Interlocutors, as some gather from *Chap. xxxii. 10, 15, &c.* where he speaks in the Language of the Writer of the Book ; and if *Moses* found it when he was with *Jethro* in *Midian*, and transcribed it, adding the historical Parts at the Begining and the End ; then this Book of *Job* is earlier than this Period, and the oldest Book in the World. And, as it is worthy of the highest Antiquity, any of these Suppositions is far more probable, than theirs, who imagine it was written in a later Age, about the time of the *Babylonish* Captivity.

The P E N T A T E U C H.

THAT *Moses* wrote the *Pentateuch*, or fivefold Volume, (from πεντε, *quinque*, and τευχος,

τεύχε, *Volumen, Liber,*) containing the five first Books in the Bible, we have the same Reason to believe, as we have that *Homer* wrote the *Iliad*; namely, the Consent of all the learned in all Ages. The first of these Books is *Genesis*, בְּרֵאשִׁית containing the only History of the World from the Creation down to *Jacob's* removing into *Egypt*, for 2298 Years. 2. *Exodus*, שְׁמוֹת is the History of the Departure of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, and of the erecting and furnishing of the Tabernacle. 3. *Leviticus*, וִיקְרָא in which are the Laws, Ceremonies, and Sacrifices of the Jewish Religion, and what particularly related to the *Levites*. 4. *Numbers*, בְּמִדְבָּר begins with the numbering of the *Israelites*; after which several Laws and remarkable Events are recorded. 5. *Deuteronomy*, דְּבָרִים is a Repetition and an Abridgement of the Law, with Exhortations and Motives to the Observance of it.

The Book of J O S H U A.

JOSHUA probably wrote the last Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, and the Book of *Joshua*, containing an Account of his own Acts, in conquering and dividing the Land of *Canaan*; and *Phineas*, the High-Priest, might add the five last Verses relating to the Death of *Joshua*, and of his Father *Eleazar* the High-Priest.

The

The Book of J U D G E S,

WAS certainly written before the second Book of *Samuel* ; compare 2 *Sam.* xi. 21. with *Judg.* ix. 53 ; and before *David* had taken *Jerusalem*, 2 *Sam.* v. 6. *Judg.* i. 21. *Samuel*, the Prophet, or Seer, the last of the Judges, was an Historian, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 29. and probably wrote this Book of *Judges*. In which we read the great Efficacy of Religion to make a Nation happy, and the dismal Calamities which Impiety brings along with it. *St. Paul* (*Heb.* xi. 32.) points out some Examples of heroic, and surprizingly successful Faith in *Gideon*, *Barak*, *Samson*, and *Jephthah*, whose History is recorded in this Book. It consists of two Parts, the one containing the History of the Judges, from *Othniel* to *Samuel*, which Part ends with the xvith Chapter ; the other, containing several memorable Actions, performed not long after the Death of *Joshua*, is thrown to the End of the Book, that it might not interrupt the Thread of the History.

The Book of R U T H.

RUTH may be considered as an Appen-
dage to the Book of *Judges*, and brings
down the History to the times of *Samuel*,
who probably was the Author of it, and
draws the Lineage of *Judah* down to *David*.
Chap.

Chap. iv. 18. Which makes it not unlikely, that it was written after *David* was anointed by *Samuel*. 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

HERE it may not be improper to observe, that *Samuel* was not only an Author, but otherwise seems to have been a great Promoter of Literature and Religion. We never read of the Companies, or Colleges of Prophets till this time, and therefore, probably, he erected them. They were Seminaries for the Instruction of Youth in the Knowledge of the Law, and for training them up in the Exercises of Piety ; particularly in the singing of sacred Hymns, in Concert with instrumental Music. This in the Language of those times, was prophesying, 1 Sam. x. 5. 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2, 3, 7. They were not, strictly speaking, all of them *Prophets* ; but upon some of them God bestowed the Spirit of Prophecy, or of predicting future Events, 2 Kings ii. 3. And we may suppose, that most of the Prophets, properly so called, came out of those Schools. *Amos* excepts himself, Chap. vii. 14. — *I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's Son*, i. e. Disciple ; for the Scholars were called, *the Sons of the Prophets*. At their Head, as Governor, they had some venerable truly inspired Prophet, who was called their *Father*. 1 Sam. x. 12. 2 Kings ii. 12. *Samuel* was one, and perhaps the first of those *Fathers*, or Governors. 1 Sam. xix. 20. *Elijah* was

was another. 2 Kings ii. 12. And *Elisha* succeeded him in this Office. 2 Kings iv. 38. *Elisha* came to *Gilgal* — and the Sons of the Prophets were sitting before him. The Master, or *Father*, sat above ; and the Scholars below, before him, at his Feet. 2 Kings ii. 3. Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy Head ? or from the Seat, where he sits above thy Head—See *Acts* xxii. 3. They lived together in Society, 2 Kings vi. 1 ; and when they had done their Lectures, and religious Exercises, were wont to eat together with their Masters. 2 Kings iv. 38, &c. This Institution had a manifest Tendency to advance Religion and Learning.

I. II. S A M U E L.

I SAMUEL was wrote before I Kings, 1 Kings ii. 17. 1 Sam. ii. 31, 35, compared ; and it is not unreasonably supposed, that *Samuel* wrote the first 24 Chapters ; and that, after his Death, the History of *David* was continued in the first and second Books of *Samuel* by the Prophets *Gad* and *Nathan*. 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

I. II. K I N G S.

THESE Books contain the History of the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, from *Solomon* to the Captivity in *Babylon*, for the Space of 423 Years. In this Period were several His-
U toriographers ;

toriographers ; for we read of *the Book of the Acts of Solomon*, 1 Kings xi. 41. which *Acts of Solomon* were recorded in *the Book of Nathan the Prophet*, and in *the Prophecy of Abijah the Shilonite*, and in *the Visions of Iddo the Seer*. 2 Chron. ix. 29. Which *Iddo* was imployed, together with *Shemaiah* the Prophet, in writing the *Acts of Rehoboam*. 2 Chron. xii. 15. We also read of the *Book of Jehu*, the Prophet, relating the *Acts of King Jehoshaphat*. 2 Chron. xx. 34. 1 Kings xvi. 1. And *Isaiah*, the Prophet, wrote the *Acts of King Uzziab*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 22 ; and also of King *Hezekiah*, 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. And it is highly probable, that he wrote the History of the two intermediate Kings *Jotham* and *Abaz*, in whose Reigns he lived. *Isai*. i. 1. And, we may well suppose, all these Histories added one to another, make the two Books of *Kings*.

NOTE — No Writer of the History of the Kings of *Judah* or *Israel* is any where expressly named, but his Title is either given him as a Prophet, or it appears from some other Part of Scripture that he was a Prophet. This Quality of the Writer was given to draw from us a proportionable Respect, and make us receive the History with the Reverence which is its due. The Prophets were the *Jewish* Historians ; therefore to the historical Books, *Joshua*, *Judges*, I. II. *Samuel*, I. II. *Kings*, they give the Title of,

נביאים ראשונים the former Prophets; as they give the Title of, נביאים אחרונים the latter Prophets, to *Isaiab, Jeremiah, &c.*

The Book of P S A L M S,

WAS composed by several Authors, but chiefly by King *David*. *Moses* composed the xcth Psalm, when God had shortened the Lives of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, as a Punishment for their Unbelief. The cxxxviith Psalm was indited soon after their Transportation to the Land of *Babylon*, and Captivity there, and the cxxvith upon their Return out of it. Others were made upon other Occasions; as may be seen in their Titles, (although those are not supposed to be of the same Authority with the Text) or collected from the Sense and Scope of the Psalm. For which Bp. PATRICK'S Paraphrase may be consulted.

THE Book of Psalms is divided into five Parts. The first reaches to the End of the xlith Psalm; the second to the End of the lxxii^d Psalm; the third to the End of the lxxxixth; the fourth to the End of the cvith; and the fifth Part to the End of the whole.

IT is a Collection of divine Odes, sublime and elegant, far beyond all human Compositions; consisting of the loftiest Celebrations of the divine Praises, the most lively

and fervent Devotions of Meditation, Thanksgiving, Prayer and Supplication, Faith, Hope, and Trust in God in every Condition, and the most excellent Instructions in every Branch of Piety and Virtue. And the frequent reading of it hath a strong Tendency to establish in our Minds the Principles of true Wisdom, even every right Disposition towards God and Man ; and that Purity of Heart, and Serenity of Mind, which is a Fund of Comfort and Joy in the Ways of God, and will animate us to walk in them with Steadiness and Delight.

MOSES was the first that composed sacred Hymns, that we read of, *Exod. xv. Deborah* the next, *Judg. v.* and then *Hannah*, *1 Sam. ii.* But *David*, an admirable Artist in Musick, (*1 Sam. xvi. 18. Amos vi. 5.*) carried divine Poetry and Psalmody to its Perfection ; and therefore is called *the sweet Psalmist of Israel. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.* He, doubtless by divine Authority, appointed the singing of Psalms by a select Company of skilful Persons, in the solemn Worship of the Tabernacle, *1 Chron. vi. 31. xvi. 4—8.* which *Solomon* continued in the Temple, *2 Chron. v. 12, 13.* And so did *Ezra*, as soon as the Foundation of the second Temple was laid. *Ezra iii. 10, 11.* Hence the People became well acquainted with the Songs of *Sion*, and having committed them to Memory, were famous for melodious
Singing

Singing among the neighbouring Countries. *Pfal.* cxxxvii. 3. And the Continuance of this Branch of divine Worship is confirmed by the Practice of our Lord, and the Instructions of the Apostle. *Mat.* xxvi. 30. *Mark* xiv. 26. *Ephes.* v. 19. *Col.* iii. 16. See also *Rev.* v. 9. xiv. 1, 2, 3. Psalm-singing is a Part of Christian Worship, which ought to be supported, encouraged, and performed in the most skilful and harmonious Manner.

THESE are the Books that were written before the Founding of *Solomon's Temple*.

C H A P. XXXI.

From the Founding of SOLOMON's Temple, till the Destruction of it by NEBUCHADNEZZAR 423 Years.

RULES for calculating and adjusting the Chronology of this Period.

THE Chronology is here carried on by the sacred Historians in a double Series of succeeding Kings ; one in the Kingdom of *Judah*, the other in the Kingdom of *Israel*, the Year of the Reign of every King of *Judah* being mentioned, in which any King of *Israel* began his Reign ; and *vice versa*. Therefore,

I. To be able to form a true Judgment of the Chronology, it is necessary that we draw up two Columns, one of the Kings of *Judah*, and the other of the Kings of *Israel*, in such manner, that the Years of their several Reigns may be set exactly over against each other ; together with the Texts which prove the Order of Succession, and the Years of the several Reigns. Thus the two Columns will be a Check upon each other ; and the general Rule will be,

II. So to adjust the corresponding Numbers of Years in both the Columns, as that they may be reduced to a Consistency. Otherwise, the Calculation cannot be just and true. Here lies the Difficulty ; and in order to surmount it some Allowance must be made. As,

III. THAT Successors may be supposed sometimes to reign with their Fathers, when the Consistency of the two Lists of Kings cannot otherwise be made out. Thus it is certain, that *Solomon* was anointed King by order of his Father *David*. 1 Kings i. 34. And *Jehoram* did begin to reign while his Father *Jehoshaphat* was alive, 2 Kings viii. 16.

IV. THE Years of Reigns is delivered in full Sums, without taking Notice of the odd Parts of a Year, either at the Beginning, or at the End of a Reign. Therefore, to bring the two Lists to an Agreement, it may reasonably be supposed, that, for instance, 12 Years,

Years, (or the 12th Year) are put down, when only eleven compleat Years are intended. So 2 *Kings* xviii. 9, 10, it is said, that *Salmaneser* laid Siege to *Samaria* in the fourth Year of *Hezekiab's* Reign, and, after a Seige of three Years, took it in the sixth Year of *Hezekiab*. Hence it appears, that the three Years of the Siege are not to be understood of three full Years, but only of two such Years; the Siege begining in the middle, suppose, of *Hezekiab's* fourth Year, continuing the whole fifth Year, and ending in some Part of the sixth Year. It is therefore plain that, according to the Style of the sacred Historians, one whole Year and two Parts of two Years, one before, and another after that Year, may be called three Years.

V. IN a turbulent State of things, an *Inter-regnum* may be allowed, where Consistency cannot be preserved without it.

VI. To find the Year before Christ, (or before A. D.) in which any Reign began, subtract the Years of the preceding Reign from that Year before A. D. in which the preceding Reign began. To find the Year of the World, (or A. M.) subtract the Year before A. D. from 4004, which is the A. M. in which our Lord was born, according to Arch-Bp. USHER, who is generally followed by our Chronologers. Further, from 4714, the Year of the *Julian Period*, corresponding

to A. M. 4004, subtract the Year before A. D. and it will give the Year of the *Julian Period*. e. g. To know what Year before A. D. *Jehoshaphat* began to reign, subtract 41, the Years of his Father *Asa's* Reign, from the Year before A. D. 955, when *Asa* began to reign, and the Remainder will give 914, the Year before A. D. when *Jehoshaphat* began to reign. Subtract the Year 914 from 4004, and it will give 3090 the A. M. of the same Event. Subtract 914 from 4714, and it will give 3800, the Year of the *Julian Period* when *Jehoshaphat* began to reign.



From the Founding of Solomon's Temple till the Destruction of it by NEBUCHAD-NEZZAR 423 Years.

<i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i>	<i>Yrs. of Reigns</i>	<i>Kings of J U D A H</i>	<i>Proofs</i>	<i>Kings of I S R A E L</i>	<i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i>
1011	36	SOLOMON (a)	1 <i>Kim.</i> vi. 37, 38.		1011
975	17	REHOBAM	— <i>xiv.</i> 20, 21.	JEROBOAM I.	975
958	3	ABIJAM	— <i>xv.</i> 2, 1.	18. (b)	958
955	41	ASA	— <i>xv.</i> 10, 9.	20.	955
953			— <i>xv.</i> 25.	NADAB (c)	953
952			— <i>xv.</i> 28, 33.	BAASHA (d)	952
929			— <i>xvi.</i> 8.	ELAH (e)	929
928			— <i>xvi.</i> 10, 15,	ZIMRI	928
928			— <i>xvi.</i> 23.	OMRI (g)	928
					11

(a) Solomon laid the Foundation of the Temple in the 4th Year of his Reign; and after that Year he reigned 36 Years. (b) 17th Compleat. (c) Nadab reigned two Parts of 2 Years, which together made 1 Year. (d) The latter Part of Baasha's first Year is laid to Nadab's second Year. (e) Part of two Years, or one compleat. (f) To preserve a Consistency with the Chronology of the Kings of Israel, we must suppose, that Omri reigned with Tibni 4 Years, 1 Kings xvi. 21, 22, beginning in the 27th Year of Asa; that after Tibni's Death he reigned alone 8 Years, or 7 compleat, beginning at the 31st Year of Asa. For so the Text, 1 Kings xvi. 22, 23. may be read,—so Tibni died, and Omri reigned alone in the 31st Year of Asa King of Judab. Omri reigned in all twelve Years: in Tirzab he reigned six Years, (g) Eleven Years compleat. When it is said, that he reigned twelve Years, Part of a Year is counted for a whole Year.

<i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i>	<i>Yrs. of Reigns</i>	<i>Kings of J U D A H</i>	<i>Proofs</i>	<i>Kings of I S R A E L</i>	<i>Yrs. of Reigns</i>	<i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i>
917			1 <i>Kim.</i> xvi. 29.	AHAB (<i>b</i>)	20	917
914	25	³⁸ JEHOSAPHAT	— xxii. 42, 41.	4 (<i>i</i>)		914
910			— xvii. 1.	[<i>Elijab</i> (<i>k</i>)]		910
904		[<i>Troy</i> taken (<i>4</i>)]				
897		¹⁷	— xxii. 51.	AHAZIAH (<i>m</i>)	1	897
896		¹⁸	2 <i>Kim.</i> iii. 1.	JEHORAM (<i>n</i>)	11	896
896			[— i. 17. ii. 1, &c. iii. 1.	<i>Elijab</i> translated, <i>Elisha</i> succeeds him.]		896
889	4	JEHORAM (<i>o</i>)	— viii. 16.			
885	1	AHAZIAH	— viii. 25, 25.	5		885
884	6	ATHALIAH	— xi. 3.	12 (<i>p</i>)	28	884
			— x. 36.	JEHU		
878	40	JOASH (<i>q</i>)	— xii. 1.	7 (<i>r</i>)		878
870		[<i>Hesiod</i> and <i>Homer</i> *]				
856		22 (<i>s</i>)	— xiii. 1.	JEHOAHAZ	17	856

(*b*) *Ahab* reigned but twenty Years compleat. See the corresponding Part of the opposite Column. (*i*) This was the third Year compleat. (*k*) About this Time *Elijab*, the Prophet, appeared. (*l*) According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON. (*m*) *Ahaziab* reigned one Year with his Father, and one Year alone. (*n*) Or *Joram*, he reigned eleven Years compleat. (*o*) Or *Joram*. It is supposed he reigned four Years with his Father. (*p*) Eleven Years compleat. (*q*) Or *Jehoash*. (*r*) The sixth Year compleat. • According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON. (*s*) Twenty-second compleat.

<i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i>	<i>Yrs. of Reigns</i>	<i>Kings of J U D A H</i>	<i>Proofs</i>	<i>Kings of I S R A E L</i>	<i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i>
839		37 (a)	2 Kin. xiii. 10.	Jehoash (a)	839
839	29	Amaziah	— xiii. 14.	[Elisha deth.]	839
825		15 (y)	— xiv. 2, 1.	y 2 (x)	839
812			— xiv. 23.	Jeroboam II.	825
810	52	Azariah (a)	— xiv. 25.	[Jonah (z)]	812
800		[Joel prophesied.]	— xv. 2, 1.	27 (b)	

(c) The thirty seventh of Joash of Judah is the Year in which Joash of Israel began to reign with his Father; with whom he is supposed to reign two Years. But those two Years are not taken into the Account, which must be reckoned from the fortieth, or thirty ninth Year complet, when Joash of Israel reigned alone. (u) Or Joash. He reigned two Years with his Father, in all, sixteen Years. (x) Those two Years he reigned with his Father; and therefore they are not taken in. (y) Fourteen Years complet. (z) Jonah, in his younger Days, perhaps about twenty eight, might begin to prophesy about this Time. (a) Or Uzziab, 2 Chron. xxvi. i. vi. i. i. Amos i. i. (b) Amaziah reigned twenty nine Years, namely, fourteen Years before Jeroboam II. began to reign, and fifteen Years after he began to reign. How then could his Son Azariah, or Uzziab, succeed him in the twenty seventh Year of Jeroboam II, when Jeroboam had reigned but fifteen Years when Amaziah died? Ah! If Azariah was sixteen, in the twenty seventh Year of Jeroboam (2 Kings xv. 2.) then he was born in the eleventh Year of Jeroboam, and so was but a Minor of four Years old in the fifteenth of Jeroboam, when his Father Amaziah died. It may therefore be supposed, that he was not inaugurated, or crowned King till twelve Years after, when he was sixteen Years of Age in the twenty seventh of Jeroboam: the Government in the mean while, being in the Hands of a Regency. But to preserve the Truth of the Chronology, the twelve Years of his Minority are included in the fifty two Years, which he is said to have reigned. Which twelve Years are to be deducted out of the twenty seven of Jeroboam's Reign; and so he will be considered as succeeding his Father in the fifteenth Year of Jeroboam. Thus all will stand right. As the Regency governed and tutored the young King exceeding well, the People were in no Haste to have him crowned.

<i>Yrs. bef.</i> <i>A. D.</i>	<i>Yrs. of</i> <i>Reigns</i>	<i>Kings of</i> <i>J U D A H</i>	<i>Proofs</i>	<i>Kings of</i> <i>I S R A E L</i>	<i>Yrs. of</i> <i>Reigns</i>	<i>Yrs. bef.</i> <i>A. D.</i>
784			[<i>Amos</i> i. 1.	<i>Amos</i> prophesied.]		787
773			[<i>Hosea</i> i. 1.	<i>Hosea</i> prophesied.]		785
772		38 (c)	2 <i>Kin.</i> xv. 8.	Interregnum	11	784
772		39	— xv. 13.	<i>ZECHARIAH</i>	6 months	773
772		39	— xv. 17.	<i>SHALLUM</i>	1 month	772
				<i>MENAHHEM</i>	10	772
				[<i>Jonab</i> went to <i>Ni-</i>		770
				<i>neveh.</i> (d)]		
761		50	— xv. 23.	<i>PEKAHIAH</i>	2	762
759		52	— xv. 27.	<i>PEKAH</i>	20	760
			[<i>Isaiah</i> (e)			
758 (f) 16		<i>JOTHAM</i>	<i>Isa.</i> i. i. vi. 1.]			758
753		[<i>Micah</i> prophesied	2 <i>Kin.</i> xv. 33, 32.			
742		<i>AHAZ</i>	<i>Micah</i> i. 1.]			
			2 <i>Kin.</i> xvi. 2, 1.			742
					17 (g)	740

(c) Thirty seven complete. (d) About this time *Jonab*, advanced in Years, might prophesy against *Nineveh*, in the Reign of *Pul*, who soon after invaded the Land of *Israel*, 2 *Kings* xv. 19; but it doth not appear, that he had any Design to conquer it. (e) About this time *Isaiah* began to prophesy, *Isai.* i. 1. and it is supposed, continued to the latter End of *Hezekiah's* Reign. (f) This Number is found by subtracting 52, the Years of *Azariah*, or *Uzziah's* Reign, from 810, which is the Year before *Christ*, when he began to reign. (g) Sixteen complete.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs. of Reigns	Kings of J U D A H	Proofs	Kings of I S R A E L	Yrs. of Reigns	Yrs. bef. A. D.
740			[1 Chron. v. 26. 2 Kin. xv. 29.]	I. Captivity of Israel by Tiglath. P.]	8	738
738			— xvii. 1.	Interregnum	9	730
730		12	— xviii. 2, 1.	HOSEA		726
726	29 (b)	HEZEKIAH	— xviii. 9, &c.	II. Israel carried into Captivity. (k)		721
721		6 (i)				
720						720
698	55	[Nabum prophesied.] MANASSEH	— xxi. 1. — xvii. 24.	III. Captivity of Israel by Esaraddon *		
677		22	[Extra iv. 2. 2 Kin. xxi. 19.]			
643	2	AMON	— xxii. 1.			
641	31	JOSIAH	— Jer. i. 2, 3.			
628		[Jeremiah began. Habakkuk, Zephaniah (l)]	— xxv. 3.			

(b) Twenty eight complete. (i) Five complete. (k) King Hoshea and his People, the ten Tribes were now carried into Assyria by Sbal-manser, King of Assyria, who dwelt at Nineveh. * See Page 329, in the Note. (l) In this Year Jeremiah began, and continued till the eleventh Year of Zedekiah. Jer. i. 2, 3. Habbakkuk and Zephaniah were probably Contemporaries with Jeremiah. See Dr. PRIDEAUX'S Connect, at the Year before A. D. 609.

Chr. beg. A.D.	Yrs. of Reign	Kings of JUDAH	Proofs	Kings of ISRAEL	
				I. Captivity of JUDAH.	
610	3 months	JEHOAHAAZ (m)	2 Kin. xxiii. 31.		
610	11	JEHOIAKIM (n)	— xxiii. 36.		
606		[Daniel carried to Babylon. (o)]	Dan. i. 1, 6.		
603		[Daniel interprets Ne- buchadnezzar's Dream.]	— ii. 1.]		
599	3 months	JEHOIACHIN (p)	2 Kin. xxiv. 8.		
599		[Mordcai and Exe- kiel Captives.]	Ezék. ii. 5, 6. Ezék. i. 1, 2.		
599	11	ZEDEKIAH	2 Kin. xxiv. 18.	II. Captivity of JUDAH.	
595		[Ezekiel had his first Vision.]	Ezék. i. 2.]		
588		The Temple was demolished.	2 Kin. xxv. 2, 9.		
587		Obadiab prophesied against the Edomites, who cruelly assisted in the Destruction of Jerusalem.		III. Captivity of JUDAH, and of the Remains of Israel.	
569		Nebuchadnezzar distracted for 7 Years together. Dan. iv.			
555		Daniel had his Vision of the 4 Empires. Dan. vii.			

(m) Or Shallum. (n) Or Eliakim. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 4. (o) Hence began the seventy Years Captivity; foretold by Jeremiah, Chap. xxv. 1, 12. xxx. 10. Dan. ix. 2. (p) Otherwise called Coniah, and Jeconiah. Jer. xxii. 24, &c. Ezék. ii. 6.

Tri. bef.
A. D.

- 538 He interpreted the Hand-writing on the Wall. *Dan. v. 25.* and was cast into the Lion's Den. *Dan. vi.*
536 Cyrus restores the Jews, and puts an End to their 70 Years Captivity. *Ezra i. 1.* See the Year before
A. D. 606. Zerubbabel was then Governor, and Jeshua High Priest. *Ezra iii. 2, 8. Hag. i. 1.*
Zech. iii. 1. iv. 6.
535 Jews begin to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. The Samaritans obstruct them. *Ezra iii. 1, &c. iv. 1.*
534 Daniel's last Vision. *Dan. x. 11, 12.*
520 Haggai and Zechariah prophesy. *Ezra v. 1. Hag. i. 1. Zech. i. 1.*
515 The Temple rebuilt and dedicated. *Ezra vi. 15, 16.*
462 Abasuerus, alias Artaxerxes, divorces Vashti, and afterward marries Esther. *Eth. i. 1, &c.* See Dr. PRI-
DEAUX's Connect. at the Year before A. D. 465. *Ezra vii.*
458 Ezra sent to be Governor of Judea by Artaxerxes. *Ezra vii.*
453 Haman plots the Destruction of the Jews. *Eth. iii. 11.*
445 Nehemiah sent Governor to Judea, and rebuilds the Walls of Jerusalem. *Neh. ii. 1, &c.*
444 Ezra is supposed to publish his Edition of the Holy Scriptures.
433 Nehemiah goes from Jerusalem to the Persian Court. *Neh. v. 14. xiii. 6.*
429 About this time Malachi prophesied, according to Dr. PRIDEAUX's Con. 428.
428 Nehemiah comes again to Jerusalem with a new Commission. *Neh. xiii. 6.*
404 Sacrates flourished.
396 Simon the Just, High-Priest of the Jews.

C H A P. XXXII.

The moral Causes of the Babylonish CAPTIVITY; and the Propriety of that Dispensation.

THE whole *Jewish* Nation, both *Judah* and *Israel*, had all along a strong and strange Propensity to Idolatry, even after the erecting of the Temple, and the establishing of the Worship of God there, in the most grand and solemn Manner. They erected *Altars to strange Gods*, frequented *High-Places* and *Groves* consecrated to Idolatrous Worship, and furnished them with *Idols* and *Images* for that Purpose. *2 Chron.* xiv. 3. *1 Kings* xv. 11, 12, 13. And their Morals were just as corrupt as their Religion, even to the Degree of Sodomy itself. *1 Kings* xv. 12.

WHAT their peculiar Temptations were, we know not. All the Endeavours of good Kings, and all the preaching of holy Prophets, sent by special Commission from God, were ineffectual to produce a Reformation. The pious King *Hezekiah* was zealous and active in rooting out Idolatry; but *Manasseh*, his Son and Successor, restored it again in the highest and most flagitious Degree of Profaneness and Iniquity, even beyond that
of

of the dark and ignorant Nations. 2 Kings xxi. 1—10. *He built up again the High-Places, which Hezekiah his Father had destroyed, &c.* He was also a grievous Persecutor of all that would not conform to his idolatrous Establishments, and so shed innocent Blood very much. Amon, his Son, followed his bad Example. Josiah, his Grandson, vigorously attempted a Reformation. 2 Kings xxiii. 24, 25. But the People never came heartily into it. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, &c. *All the chief of the Priests, and the People transgressed very much, after all the Abominations of the Heathen, and polluted the House of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by his Messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had Compassion on his People, and on his Dwelling-place; but they mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his Words, and misused his Prophets, until the Wrath of the Lord arose against his People, till there was no Remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldees, who slew their young Men with the Sword, in the House of their Sanctuary; and had no Compassion upon young Man or Maiden, old Man, or him that stooped for Age, he gave them all into his Hand. And all the Vessels of the House of God, great and small, and the Treasures of the House of the Lord, and the Treasures of the King, and of his Princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt*

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the House of God, and brake down the Wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the Palaces thereof with Fire; and destroyed all the goodly Vessels thereof. And them that escaped from the Sword, carried he away to Babylon; where they were Servants to him and his Sons, until the Reign of the Kingdom of Persia.

OBSERVE—This dreadful Calamity came upon them gradually. First, good King *Jo-
siab* was, in Judgment upon the Land, slain in Battle by *Pbaraob-Necho*, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 29. who put *Jeboabaz* that succeeded him into Chains, sent him Prisoner into *Egypt*, and put the Land of *Judah* under a heavy Tribute. 2 *Kings* xxiii. 33. *Jehoiakim* succeeded, a wicked Prince like his Predecessors. In his third Year, *Nebuchadnezzar* took *Jerusalem*, and carried away Part of the Vessels of the House of God, and many of the People into Captivity. Particularly, he gave Order to *Ashpenaz the Master of his Eunuchs*, that he should make Choice out of the Children of the royal Family, and of the Nobility of the Land, such as he found to be of the fairest Countenance, and the quickest Parts, to be carried to *Babylon*, and there made Eunuchs in his Palace, *Daniel* i. 1—4. whereby was fulfilled *Isaiab's* Prediction above an hundred Years before. *Isaiab* xxxix. 7. Among these Youths were *Daniel*, *Hananiah*, *Misbael* and *Azariab*. *Dan.* i. 6, 7. Moreover the King was made a Tributary, and the

the whole Land reduced into Vassalage under the *Babylonians*. A severe Visitation, but had not the proper Effect upon *Jeboiachin*, the next King, who was as corrupt as his Father. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 8, 9. He had been but three Months on the Throne, when *Nebuchadnezzar* again besieged and took *Jerusalem*, with the King and all the royal Family; all the most valuable things in the Temple, and in the King's Treasures, with all the mighty Men of Valor, all the Craftsmen and Smiths, he took away, leaving none in the Land, but the poorest Sort. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12, 13, 14. Among the rest, *Ezekiel*, (Chap. i. 1, 2.) and *Mordecai* (Esth. ii. 5, 6.) were now carried Captives. Yet still there was no Amendment of the Religion or Morals of the Nation. *Zedekiah*, the next and last King, was as bad as his Predecessors. 2 *Kin.* xxiv. 18, 19. And in about eleven Years, *Nebuchadnezzar*, after a long and close Siege, took *Jerusalem*, brake down its Walls, burnt the City and Temple, carried away all the sacred Utenfils, and all the People, except a few of the very poorest to till the Ground, and reduced the whole Land of *Judea*, in a Manner, to utter Desolation for the Sins thereof.

THE Propriety of this Dispensation will appear, if we reflect,

I. THAT the Lenity of God appeared in bringing this terrible Overthrow upon them

so gradually, after a Succession of Judgments from less to greater, for the Space of Twenty-two Years; which should have been a Warning to them, and by Experience have convinced them, that the Threatenings denounced by the Prophets would certainly be executed.

II. THAT it was a just Punishment of their Sins; particularly of their Idolatry, whereby they forsook God, and therefore God justly forsook them, and delivered them into the Hands of their Enemies, as *Moses* had foretold. *Lev. xxvi. 30—36.*

III. THIS dreadful Calamity was the most effectual Means to work their Reformation, which was the End proposed by the divine Wisdom. Now, in their captive, disconsolate State, they had time, and their Calamities had a natural tendency to give them a Disposition, to reflect upon the long Series of Iniquity and Perverseness, which had brought them under the heaviest of God's Judgments. Now *their own Wickedness corrected them, and their Backslidings reproved them; now they must know and see, that it was an evil thing, and bitter, that they had forsaken the Lord their God, and that his Fear had not been in them.* *Isaiah ii. 19.* In the Land of their Captivity the Sermons of the Prophets, declaiming with the highest Authority against their profane and vicious Practices, would be still sounding in their Ears,
and

and their abject, wretched Condition, the Consequence of such Practices, would sink them deep into their Hearts, and surely give them an utter Detestation of what they very well knew was the Cause of all their grievous Sufferings.

THEY had suffered themselves to be shamefully infatuated by their false Prophets, who had prophesied to them in *Baal*, as the most infallible Oracle. *Jer.* ii. 8. They were Prophets of the *Deceit of their Hearts*, xxiii. 26. They had encouraged a Rabble of *Diviners, Dreamers, Enchanters and Sorcerers*, who had most impudently imposed upon their Credulity, assuring them, in the Name of the Lord too, that they should not serve the King of *Babylon*, *Jer.* xxvii. 9. xxviii. 4. xxix. 8, 9; that he should not come against them, nor against the Land; xxxvii. 19. They *belied the Lord, and said, it is not He, neither shall Evil come upon us; neither shall we see Sword, nor Famine*, *Jer.* v. 12. *but I will give you assured Peace in this Place.* xiv. 13. Thus they caused the People to err; and their Kings, Princes, and Priests concurred to strengthen the Delusion. *Jer.* ii. 26. v. 31. xxxii. 32. By the way, these Prophets and Priests were Men of very wicked Lives. *Zeph.* iii. 4. *Jer.* xxiii. 11. They *committed Adultery, walked in Lies, strengthened the Hands of evil Doers, and prevented their returning from Wicked-*

ness, Jer. xxiii. 14 ; they persecuted and murdered the Just, in the midst of *Jerusalem*. Lam. iv. 13. From them *Profaneness* went forth into all the Land, Jer. xxiii. 15, which by their Means was become full of *Adulterers*, and mourned because of *Swearing*, Verse 10. See a more particular Description of the Wickedness of the Land, *Ezek. xxii. 6—13.*

BUT now, where were all their false Prophets, with all their bold Pretensions, and flattering Promises? The Delusion is now quite at an End, and they find themselves most miserably deceived. Their Eyes are opened, and they are thoroughly convinced, they were a Set of the vilest Impostors, who had deluded them into the most wretched Circumstances. *The Prophets* were now become *Wind*, Jer. v. 13, *an everlasting Reproach, a perpetual Shame*, which could not be forgotten, xxiii. 40. And in Proportion as these Deceivers were detested, the true Prophets, who would have drawn them to just Regards of God and his holy Law, would be esteemed and honored.

DOUBTLESS the lying Prophets and Priests had filled their Heads with specious Pretences for their idolatrous Practices ; and assured them, they were still the beloved People of God, invested in all the distinguishing Privileges of his Church and peculiar People, and secure under his Protection ;
with

with great Ostentation and Confidence crying out, *the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these* [Men or Buildings] *Jer. vii. 4.* But now they found all their Sophistry to be lying Words, and could no longer take Assurance from their peculiar Privileges, or their magnificent Temple, when their Temple and City were both destroyed, and themselves cast out into an Heathen Land, where they were so long, and so shamefully stript of all their peculiar Honors. In short, no Method could have been devised more proper to give this People a fixed Detestation of Idolatry, and the vile Arts by which they were seduced into it. And it had this Effect. They never more fell into Idolatry, but retain the greatest Abhorrence of it unto this Day.

IV. THE Law of God, written by *Moses*, as the Rule of their Conduct in all Affairs civil and religious, and the Ground of their Happiness, they had so far neglected, that once it was almost unknown and lost among them. *2 Kings xxii. 8—12.* This Contempt of the divine Law, the Prophets had frequently and strongly protested against. (*Isai. vi. 24. xxx. 9. Jer. vi. 19. viii. 8. ix. 13. Hof. viii. 12. Amos ii. 4.* and in other Places) and publicly declared, that it would be their Ruin. And in their ruined State, this must be remembered, as the primary Reason of all their Sufferings; and they must be tho-

roughly sensible, that a due Regard to the Law of God, was the only Way to recover his Favor, and their own Prosperity ; and accordingly must be disposed to be attentive to it. For *Ezra*, after the Captivity, found so little Difficulty in introducing the publick Reading of the Law, that the People themselves called for it. *Neh.* viii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 18, xiii. 1. *Ezra* was a ready Writer of the Law of God, *Ezra* vii. 6, 10, 11, 12, and active in propagating the Knowledge of it. Doubtless he wrote, or directed to be written, several Copies of the Law, to be dispersed into proper Hands. And whereas before the Captivity they had no Synagogues for publick Worship or Instruction, nor any Places to resort to for either, unless the Temple at *Jerusalem*, or the Cities of the *Levites*, or to the Prophets, when God was pleased to send them ; thus Ignorance grew among the People ; but after the Captivity Synagogues were erected among them in every City, where the Law was read every Sabbath, and other Acts of Devotion performed, This was the most effectual Method of preserving the Knowledge of God and his Law, and a Sense of their Duty. This was another good Effect of this Dispensation, and may justly be given as one good Reason of their being so strongly fixed against Idolatry, ever after the *Babylonish* Captivity.

V. THIS Dispensation was also calculated to produce good Effects among the Nations, whither they were carried into Captivity. For wherever they were dispersed in the eastern Countries, they would bring with them the Knowledge of the true God, now seriously imprest upon their Hearts. But divine Providence, by such signal Circumstances of his Interposition, as were published and known over all the vast Extent of the eastern Empires, raised some of the captive *Jews* to the highest Posts of Dignity and Power in the Courts of *Assyria* and *Persia*. *Dan.* i. 19, 20. Insomuch that the most haughty Monarchs openly confessed the living and true God, as the only and supreme God. *Dan.* ii. 47, 48, 49. iv. 34, &c. And made Decrees, that were published throughout their spacious Dominions, in Favor of the Profession and Worship of him. *Dan.* iii. 29. vi. 25, &c. And the Affair of Queen *Esther* and *Mordecai*, and the Decree of the Emperor *Abasuerus*, in Favor of all the *Jews* in his Empire, consisting of 127 Provinces, must, not only give the *Jews* every where great Distinction and Honor, but also render the great God more known, and his Religion more respectable; insomuch that many of the People of the Land, many of the *Persians*, became *Jews*, or Profelytes to the Jewish Religion. *Esther* viii. 11, &c. And the great *CYRUS* was so well acquainted with
the

the true God, that, as one of his first Acts, after he was advanced to the Empire of *Persia*, he made a Decree for the Return of the *Jews* into their own Country, and for the rebuilding the Temple. *Ezra* i. 1—5. From all this it is clear, that the *Jews*, notwithstanding their Depravity in their own Country, during the Captivity of 70 Years, must have been a burning and a shining Light, all over the eastern Countries. And thus, in this Dispensation also, God, the Father and Governor of Mankind, was working for the Reformation and Improvement of the World, in that which is the true Excellency of their Nature, and the only Foundation of their Happiness.

C H A P. XXXIII.

Authors within the PERIOD from the Building to the Destruction of the TEMPLE.

LITERATURE in this Period received a considerable Advance; probably, by Means of the Schools of the Prophets.

SOLOMON was a great Author, as he was endowed with an uncommon Share of Wisdom. For he spake three thousand Proverbs, and his Songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of Trees, from the Cedar that is in Lebanon,

Lebanon, even unto the Hyssop that springeth out of the Wall; he spake also of Beasts, and of Fowl, and of creeping things, and of Fishes. But of all his Works only three are taken into the sacred Canon, namely, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and his Song.

P R O V E R B S.

THIS Book consisteth of the most useful Rules for the right Direction of Life in Religion and Morals, and is the most authentic and excellent of the kind that can be produced in Antiquity. It may be divided into five Parts. I. In the first Part the Tutor gives his Pupil Admonitions, Directions, Cautions, and Excitements to the Study of Wisdom. *Chap.* first to the tenth. II. The second contains the Proverbs of *Solomon*, properly so called, delivered in distinct, independent, general Sentences. *Chap.* 10th to the 22^d, *Ver.* 17. III. The third Part begins at *Chap.* xxii. 17. where the Tutor again addresseth himself to his Pupil, and gives him fresh Admonitions to the diligent Study of Wisdom; which is followed by a Sett of Instructions delivered in the imperative Mood to the Pupil, who is supposed all the while to be standing before him. *Chap.* xxii. 17. to *Chap.* xxv. IV. The fourth Part is distinguished by its being a Collection of *Solomon's* Proverbs, selected, we may suppose,
out

out of a much greater Number, by the Men of *Hezekiah*; perhaps, by the Prophets *Isaiab*, *Hosea*, *Micah*, who all flourished in the Days of *Hezekiah*, and not improbably assisted him in his pious Endeavours to restore true Religion. 2 *Chron.* xxxi. 20, 21. This Part, as the second, consists chiefly of distinct, unconnected Sentences, and reacheth from *Chap.* xxv. to *Chap.* xxx. V. The fifth Part contains a Sett of wise Observations and Instructions, which *Agur*, the Son of *Jakeb*, delivered to his Pupils, *Ithiel* and *Ucal*, *Chap.* xxx. And the xxxist Chapter contains the Precepts which his Mother, possibly a *Jewish* Woman married to some neighbouring Prince, delivered to *Lemuel*, her Son; being passionately solicitous to guard him against Vice, to establish him in the Principles of Justice, and to have him married to a Wife of the best Qualities. These two Chapters are a kind of Appendix to the Book of *Proverbs*. Note — It is uncertain who *Agur* and the Mother of *Lemuel* were.

E C C L E S I A S T E S.

THIS Book was written by the *Preacher*, the Son of *David*, King of *Jerusalem*, *Chap.* i. 1; that is to say, by *Solomon*, (probably in the latter Part of his Life) as appears from *Chap.* i. 16. ii. 4, &c. The Subject of it is, an Enquiry into the chief Good, or Happiness of Man, in this World. And

I. HE

I. HE confutes the false Opinion of those that place Happiness in human Wisdom, or Philosophy; in the Pleasures, Amusements, or Splendor of Life; in Honor, Magistracy, and Dominion; in Riches or Wealth. This, in the six first Chapters. II. He teaches, that true Felicity is to be found only in a serious Regard to God and Religion, in the six last Chapters. In both Parts he intermixes several incidental Reflections, which are of use to make us wise and pious. The whole is adapted to draw us from the inordinate Pursuit of earthly things, and from a wrong to a lawful Use of them; without any Offence to God, or Damage to ourselves, till we arrive at a never-dying Felicity.

THE SONG of SOLOMON.

THE *Song of Songs*, or the most excellent Song, was composed by *Solomon*; and is a noble *Epithalamium*, or Marriage-Song, of the pastoral kind, embellished with the most grand and beautiful Images. In the Letter it is allowed to be a Celebration of the Marriage of *Solomon* to *Pharaoh's* Daughter; but the *Jewish* Rabbies, and many of the Christian Fathers, have understood it as a spiritual Allegory, representing the Love of God; or as Christians say, of Christ, to his Church; which,

which, in other Parts of Scripture, is represented as his Spouse, *Psal. xlv. 10, &c. Harken, O Daughter, and consider, &c. Ver. 13. The King's Daughter is all glorious within, &c.* Which Psalm David is supposed to have made upon the same Occasion, namely, at Solomon's Marriage ; wherein, as the Bridegroom is justly supposed to be Christ, *Ver. 3—8.* so his Bride may well be supposed to be the Church. John Baptist compares Christ to a Bridegroom, *John iii. 28, 29 ;* and so doth our Lord himself, *Mat. ix. 15. xxv. 1.* and the Kingdom of Heaven he compares to a sumptuous Marriage-Feast, *Mat. xxii. 2.* So also *Rev. xix. 7. xxi. 2.* the Marriage of the Lamb to his Bride, or Wife, clothed in fine Linen, (which doubtless represents the Christian Church in a State of Purity) is spoken of. And St. Paul, in strong Terms, such as Adam used when he was married to Eve, represents Christ as a Husband to the Church. *Ephes. v. 25, &c.* And so also, *2 Cor. xi. 2. I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ.* And frequently in the Prophets God is set forth as the Husband or Bridegroom to the Church. *Isai. liv. 5. lxi. 10. lxii. 4, 5. Jer. iii. 20. xxxi. 32. Hos. ii. 2, 7, 16, 19.* Hence, Apostacy from God is very commonly represented as Whoredom, and Adultery, both in the old and new Testament.

ALL this is very just, and supplieth very instructive and comfortable Meditation. And it is certainly the best Use we can make of this elegant Song to apply it thus to spiritual Purposes. But the Ideas, which the Scripture gives us of God's or Christ's Relation to the Church, as a Husband, are too general, to serve as a Key to the great Variety of Particulars in this Poem; which therefore, as it is never quoted in any other Part of Scripture, can be reduced to no certain Rule of Interpretation, but must be left to every Person's Fancy or Imagination. Bp. PATRICK has done, perhaps, as much as can be done upon the spiritualizing Scheme.

WITHIN this Period were also written the Prophecies of *Joel, Amos, Hosea, Jonab, Isaiah, Micah, Nabum, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Obadiab*. These before the Captivity. During the 70 Years Captivity, *Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther*. After the Captivity, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, I. and II. *Chronicles*. These compleat the Canon of the old Testament. And whereas it is of great Use to the right Understanding of the Prophets to know the Reigns and Times in which they prophesied, and the particular Occasions upon which any of them delivered their Prophecies, I shall now attempt to digest and range them in chronological Order, as follows.

C H A P. XXXIV.

PROPHETS *before the CAPTIVITY.*

ABOUT Twenty-six Years after the Death of *Elisba*, the Prophet, (2 *Kings* xiii. 20.) *Jonah the Son of Amittai*, the Prophet, which was of Gath-heper, was sent by God with a Message of Encouragement and Success to *Jeroboam II.* King of *Israel.* 2 *Kings* xiv. 25. This might happen when *Jonah* was about 28 Years of Age.

J O E L i. ii. iii.

JOEL at *Jerusalem* (Joel ii. 1, 15, 17.) might prophesy before *Amos* at *Samaria*, *Amos* i. 1. iv. 1. For *Amos*, Chap. iv. 7, 9. may refer to the Devastation by *Palmer-Worms*, &c. and Drought, which *Joel* predicted, Chap. i. 6, 7, 19, 20. However, as the Sense of this Prophecy, in no Part, that I know of, depends upon the time, when it was delivered, there can be no Harm in supposing, that *Joel* prophesied about this time.

A M O S i—ix.

SOME time after *Joel*, *Amos* might begin to prophesy in the Kingdom of *Israel.* Certainly

tainly he did prophesy in those Days of *Uzziah* or *Azariah* King of *Judah*, and of *Jeroboam II.* King of *Israel*, in which they were Cotemporaries, *Chap. i. 1.* How long he continued is not intimated. He had no regular Education in the Schools of the Prophets, (which supposeth that other Prophets had) but was originally a Herdsman, and a Gatherer of *Sycamore Fruit*, or wild Figs, *Chap. vii. 14.* He had an express Commission from God to prophesy unto his People *Israel*, *Ver. 15.* This Book may consist of several distinct Discourses, but as they are without Date, we cannot assign the particular times when they were delivered.

H O S E A i. ii. iii.

H O S E A is justly supposed to be Cotemporary with *Amos*. He prophesied against the Ten Tribes, or the Kingdom of *Israel*, begining in the Reign of *Jeroboam II.* and prophesying in the Reigns of *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Abaz*, and *Hezekiah*, Kings of *Judah*. He predicted the Captivity of the Ten Tribes; and as that Captivity happened in the sixth Year of *Hezekiah*, probably he lived to see it accomplished by *Shalmaneser* King of *Affyria*; which was done about 64 Years after the Commencement of his prophetic Office.

THIS Prophet is commanded to *take unto him a Wife of Whoredoms, and Children of Whoredoms,*

Whoredoms, Chap. i. 2. This might all be transacted in a Vision, in the *Council of God*. See the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh Chapters of *Ezekiel*. Or it might be a Parable, to be spoken as such to the Children of *Israel*. See *Ezek.* xxiv. 3, &c. Here that is ordered to be done as a Fact, which was only to be spoken as a Parable. But if the Prophet did really marry a lewd Woman, who had Children not by him, but by some other Man, this was no Sin in him, who did it by divine Command, in order to explain to the *Israelites* their Wickedness, and the Punishment of it. The adulterous Wife represented the *Israelites*, who by their Idolatries had gone a whoring from God, their own Husband. The Children, which this Woman bare, are the ruinous Effects of the Idolatry of the Children of *Israel*. The first Bastard was called *Jezreel*; and denoted the Vengeance which God would take upon the House of *Jebu*, for the Blood which he shed in *Jezreel*, Chap. i. 4. The second was called *Lo-rubamah*, Ver 6. to denote, that God would no longer spare the House of *Israel*, but take them quite away out of their Land. The Name of the third was *Lo-ammi*, Ver. 9. which signified, that the Relation between God and the *Israelites* was dissolved.

H O S E A iv.

THE *Interregnum* in *Israel*, preceding the Reign of *Zechariah*, was doubtless a time of very great Disorder and Violence, and of much bloody Strife for the Crown. Probably, *Zechariah* gained it by cutting off Competitors. *Shallum* slew him, *Menabem* slew *Shallum*, and all within the Space of seven Months. To this sad State of things *Hosea* may well be supposed to refer, *Chap. iv. 2. By Swearing and Lying, and Killing and Stealing, and committing Adultery, they break out, and Blood toucheth [reacheth unto] Blood.* Here, therefore, we may place the fourth Chapter of *Hosea*.

J O N A H i. ii. iii. iv.

JONAH, I suppose, about the second Year of *Menabem*, King of *Israel*, and about the 70th Year of his Age, was sent to cry against *Nineveh*, about 700 Miles from *Gath-heper*, then a great, wealthy, populous, and haughty City, the chief Seat of the *Assyrian* Empire, and the Mistress of the World; which had long been remarkable for Luxury and Jollity, to a Proverb, *καίσιων Νινεβ ευφρανσεως*, *better than merry Nineveh*. By *Zephaniah* it is called, *the rejoicing, or joyous, City*, *Chap. ii. 15.* To be sent with a Message of divine Wrath to such a Place as this could not but

seem a frightful and dangerous Errand to *Jonab*. He saw how much the *Israelites*, God's own People, hated and persecuted the Prophets, who reprov'd and threatened them. What then could he expect from that great and wicked City, *Nineveh*, the Head-quarters of Pride and Sin? Further, he knew the Prophets very much hazarded their Reputation in the World, when employed in denouncing Judgments; because God, being gracious, was slow in executing them. On this Account, the Prophets at *Bethel* and *Jerusalem* were vilely abused and decried by insolent and rude Infidels, who durst even profess to *desire*, or long for, *the Day of the Lord*, (*Amos* v. 18.) in a confident Persuasion, that it would never come; and dared to challenge God to hasten his Work. *Isai.* v. 19. See also *Jer.* xvii. 15. *Ezekiel* xii. 22. And if this should be *Jonab's* Case at *Nineveh*, what could he expect but to be torn in Pieces for an Impostor? How must he, and the Religion he professed, be exposed to publick Contempt and Scorn? This was what he particularly dreaded. *Chap.* iv. 2. He was therefore resolved to *flee from the Presence of* [from before] *Jehovah*; that is, I suppose, to run away from the Council of God in the Land of *Israel*, to some remote Country beyond Sea*, where, he thought, it was never held.

But

* Note — *Tarshish* may signify any remote Country beyond Sea, as the *Indies* now with us. See Root 1827 in the Eng. Heb. Concordance.

But he was stopt by a Miracle, and at length obliged to deliver the doleful Message, *Yet forty Days and impenitent Nineveh shall be overthrown.* Convinced of his miraculous Mission, § the King proclaimed a Fast, and enjoined all the usual Forms of Repentance; *and God repented of the Evil, which he had said he would do unto them.*

IT is very probable, that the idolatrous Priests, and the Astrologers, Soothsayers, and Magicians, who must be numerous at *Nineveh*, as well as at *Babylon*, (*Isai. xlvii. 13. Dan. ii. 2.*) would zealously endeavour to divert the King, when the first Fright was over, from attending to a Message from *Jehovah*, as soon as ever they possibly could, before the forty Days were expired. They would naturally represent *Jonah* to the King and all the People, as an Impostor; and bear them in Hand that the Prediction was false, and would not be fulfilled. This must give the Prophet, who was zealous for the Glory of the God of *Israel*, very great Uneasiness; insomuch, that he wished for Death, *Chap. iv. 2, 3*; as *Elijah*, in a Case somewhat similar, had done before him. *1 Kings xix. 4.*

THE Question of *Jehovah*, *Jon. iv. 4.* which we render, *Dost thou well to be angry?* should have been rendered, *Art thou very*

Y 3 *much*

much grieved? And so *Ver.* 9. See *Heb. Eng. Concordance*. R. 7+8, 637.

PUL, the King of *Affyria*, who came against the Land of *Israel* in the Reign of *Menahem*, 2 Kings xv. 19. is supposed by Arch-Bishop USHER to be the King of *Nineveh*, to whom *Jonah* was sent. As it appears from the History, that *Pul* had no Design to make Conquest of the Land of *Israel*, I can assign no Reason, why he should reach his Arm over the Kingdom of *Syria*, which lay to the Extent of about 300 Miles, between his Dominions, and the Land of *Canaan*, to strike at *Israel*, but that he did it in Revenge for the supposed Insult, which *Jonah* had offered to him and his People.

ISAIAH vi. ii. iii. iv. v.

ISAIAH, the brightest Luminary of the *Jewish* Church, justly called the evangelical Prophet, he speaks so much, and so clearly of *Christ*, began to prophesy in the Year King *Uzziab* died, *Chap.* vi. 1. and prophesied in *Judah* in the successive Reigns of *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah*. He was certainly alive and prophesied when *Merodach-baladen* sent his Embassy to *Hezekiah*, who had been sick, in the 14th Year of *Hezekiah*, and before *Christ* 714. Thus we certainly know that he prophesied 46 Years. There is an ancient and probable Tradition among the

the *Jews*, that he suffered Martyrdom under *Manasseh*, in the first Year of his Reign, before Christ 698, by being cruelly sawn asunder ; to which the Apostle, *Heb. xi. 37.* is generally thought to have Respect. And then he must have continued 61 Years. See *PIERCE* upon *Heb. xi. 37.*

THE first Chapter, by Reason of the grand Exordium, might be judged proper to stand at the Front of the Book ; but it gives such an Account of the distressed, desolate Condition of the Land of *Judah*, as agrees much better with the wicked and afflicted Reign of the Apostate *Ahaz*, than with the flourishing Circumstances of the Country in the Reigns of *Uzziah*, and of his Son and Successor *Jotham*, who were both, in the main, good Princes. Compare *Isai. i. 7, 8, 9.* with *2 Chron. xxvi. 1—16.* and the whole 27th Chapter. But the second, third, fourth, and fifth Chapters of this Prophecy, do describe, and exactly correspond to, a State of national Wealth and Prosperity, which are usually attended with Pride, Arrogance, and Luxury. See *Chap. ii. 6—18. iii. 16—25. v. 8, 11, 12.*

THEREFORE, I take this to be the Order of those Chapters. In the sixth Chapter, and in the Year before Christ 759 the Prophet, in the Council of God, received his Commission ; and soon after delivered the Contents of the second, third, fourth, and

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fifth Chapters. And these Chapters contain all that remains of his Prophecies in the Reigns of *Uzziah* and *Jotham*, for about the Space of 16 Years, till the first Year of King *Abaz*.

MICAH i. ii.

THESE two Chapters were delivered before the Destruction of *Samaria*, which is here predicted, *Chap. i. 6.* in the Reign of *Jotham*, *Chap. i. 1.* And therefore may be rightly placed about this time.

ISAIAH. vii.

IN the first Year of *Abaz* King of *Judah*, *Rezin* King of *Syria*. and *Pekab* King of *Israel*, formed a Design of dethroning *Abaz*, and of extirpating the Family of *David*, by setting up the Son of *Tabeal*, some potent, factious Jew, to be King of *Judah*. And therefore having no Design upon the Nation, but only upon the royal Family, marched directly to *Jerusalem*, and laid close Siege to it. But as it was the Will of God, not to extirpate the Family of *David*, but only to punish wicked *Abaz*, he sent *Isaiab* to encourage him to make a vigorous Defence, and to assure him they should not prevail against him ; and that the House of *David* should subsist till the *Messiah* was born. Then was the Prophecy delivered

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to *Abaz* contained in the seventh Chapter of
Isaiab *.

ISAIAH viii. ix. x. to the fifth Verse.

AHAZ, a wicked Idolater, paid little Regard to what *Isaiab* had spoken to him in the Name of the Lord. Therefore God ordered *Isaiab* to take a large Roll of Parchment, and therein, with the *Pen of a Man*, i. e. in the common and most legible Way of writing, to put down and publish, what God should further discover about the present Deliverance and future Calamities of *Judab*. The Roll was to be a Comment upon the Name of a Son, which was then born to the Prophet, and by divine Direction was

* ISAI. vii. 8. *Within 65 Years Ephraim shall be broken, that it be not a People.* This was predicted in the first Year of *Abaz*. *Abaz* reigned 16 Years, and in the sixth Year of his Successor, *Hezekiah*, *Shalmaneser* took *Samaria*, and carried away *Israel* [*Ephraim*] unto *Affyria*. This makes but 16 and 5, or 21 Years. How then shall we make out 65 Years? This has very much puzzled the Critics. But observe, probably *Israel*, or *Ephraim*, was carried into Captivity by the *Affyrians* three times. I. By *Tiglath-Pileser*. 1 Chron. v. 26. 2 Kings xv. 29. II. By his Son *Shalmaneser*, 2 Kings xvii. 6. xviii. 10, 11. Thus *Ephraim* was no more a Kingdom. III. Probably, by *Efarbaddon*, who finally carried away all Remains of the People; which is implied in his bringing new Inhabitants from *Babylon*, *Cuthab*, &c. 2 Kings xvii. 24. *Ezra* iv. 2. Thus *Ephraim* was no more a People. This happened in the 22^d Year of *Manesseh*, 65 Years from the first of *Abaz*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 677.

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was called *Maher-she-lal-bash-baz*, i. e. *make Speed to the Spoil, and hasten to the Prey*. Denoting the speedy Destruction of the two confederate Kings of *Samaria* and *Damascus*. This Roll, I suppose, takes in the eighth and ninth Chapters of *Isaiah*, and the five first Verses of the 10th Chapter.

I S A I A H xvii.

THIS Chapter relates to the same Subject, the Destruction of *Israel* and *Damascus*; and therefore, I judge, it was delivered in the same Year, after the Roll was finished. For in about two Years after, *Tiglathpileser*, King of *Assyria*, took *Damascus*, and carried the People therein captive to *Kir*. 2 Kings xvi. 9.

I S A I A H i.

PEKAH and *Rezin* failing in their Attempt upon *Jerusalem*, (2 Kings xvi. 5. *Isai*. vii. 1.) the next Year, 741, they returned with Forces better appointed, and Councils better concerted; and dividing themselves into three Armies, one under *Pekah*, another under *Rezin*, and a third under *Zichri*, a mighty Man of *Ephraim*, they fell upon the Country in three different Parts, making every where terrible Havock and Slaughter, and carrying away a prodigious Number of Captives. See 2 Chron. xxviii. 5—9. And no sooner was the Land freed from those
Enemies,

Enemies, but it was invaded by the *Edomites*, on the South, and the *Philistines*, on the West, who treated it with the same Cruelty, slaying, plundering, and carrying away Captives. 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 17, 18, 19. Thus was *Judah* grievously distressed all over the Country, and brought exceeding low, which lately had been high in Wealth and Power, because they and their King had forsaken the Lord their God. And upon this Occasion, most probably, *Isaiab* delivered the prophetic Sermon, contained in the first Chapter, as it is very suitable to the State of the Nation at that time.

I S A I A H xxviii.

THIS Chapter, relating to the Destruction of *Ephraim*, or the Ten Tribes, without any mention of *Syria* or *Damascus*, lieth between the Destruction of *Damascus*, 740, and the Captivity of the Ten Tribes, 721.

H O S E A v. vi.

AHAZ, greatly distressed by *Pekah*, *Rezin*, &c. called in *Tiglath-pileser*, King of *Assyria*, to his Help, 2 *Kings* xvi. 7. 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 16. And *Menahem*, King of *Israel*, about 30 Years before that, had hired *Pul*, King of *Assyria*, to confirm the Kingdom in his Hand, 2 *Kings* xv. 19 ; though they reaped no Benefit from them. These are the only times

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times in which the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel* applied to the *Assyrian* for Assistance. And whereas *Hosea*, Chap. v. 13. mentions both those Applications, the fifth and sixth Chapters must be taken in after *Abaz* had applied to *Tiglath-pileser*.

ISAIAH xiv. 28, &c.

THE *Philistines* triumphed over *Israel* all the Days of *Abaz*. But in the Year *Abaz* died, *Isaiab* delivered the *Burden*, or Message, relating to them, Chap. xiv. 28, &c. which was fulfilled by *Hezekiab*, Son and Successor to *Abaz*. 2 Kings xviii. 8.

ISAIAH xv. xvi.

THE *Moabites* had not used the *Israelites* well, who fled for Shelter from the Ravages of *Pekab* and *Rezin*. With this Inhumanity they are ironically upbraided, *Isai*. xvi. 3, 4. But now they are told, the Oppressor and Spoiler were ceased, and the Throne of *Hezekiab* should be established in Mercy, and he should sit upon it in Truth, &c. Therefore, this Prophecy against *Moab*, must have been delivered about the Beginning (perhaps in the second Year) of *Hezekiab*'s Reign. And Dr. PRIDEAUX supposeth it was accomplished by *Sbalmaneser*, three or four Years after, when, as he thinks, *Sbalmaneser*, previously to the Siege of *Samaria*, subdued the *Moabites*,

ites, to prevent any Incursions, or Attacks, from that Quarter.

H O S E A vii—xiv.

THE Prophecies in these Chapters were delivered (1.) after *Ephraim*, or the King of *Israel*, had called to *Egypt* for Succour, *Chap.* vii. 11. xii. 1. as *Menahem* had done before to *Assyria*. 2 Kings xv. 19. But the only time they applied to *Egypt* was, when King *Hoshea*, revolting from *Shalmaneser*, sent Messengers to *So* King of *Egypt*. 2 Kings xvii. 4. Which occasioned *Shalmaneser's* besieging of *Samaria*, and carrying the Ten Tribes into Captivity. And therefore these Chapters might be delivered about three Years before that Event. (2.) These Prophecies were delivered after the first Year of *Shalman*, or *Shalmaneser*, who, according to Dr. PRIDEAUX, began to reign in the Year before Christ 728, or 729. For the Prophet *Hosea* refers to the Destruction of *Beth-arbel* by *Shalman*, *Chap.* x. 14. And they were delivered before the taking of *Samaria*, which was in the 8th Year of *Shalmaneser*, before Christ 721; for the Prophet evidently, in those Chapters, supposeth, that *Ephraim*, or the Ten Tribes, were not yet carried into Captivity. Therefore, they were delivered after the Destruction of *Beth-arbel*, and before the Captivity of the Ten Tribes, about the time above noted.

M I C A H iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

THE last Verse of the third Chapter of *Micah* was uttered in the time of *Hezekiah*, Jer. xxvi. 18; and here may both that Chapter, and all that follow it be placed, as prophesied in some time of *Hezekiah's* first 13 Years, before *Sennacherib* besieged *Jerusalem*. For the Prophet seems to speak of that Siege and *Sennacherib's* Blasphemy, Chap. v. 1, 5. He speaketh glorious things of *Christ* and his Kingdom, and nameth the very Town where he should be born, Chap. v. 2. In Chapter iv. 1, 2, 3, he useth the very Words of *Isaiab*, Chap. ii. 2, 3, 4, to express the Conflux to the Kingdom of *Christ*, his Power in it, and the Peace which, at length, it should give to the World.

N A H U M i, ii, iii.

AFTER *Sbalmaneser*, King of *Nineveh*, had taken *Samaria*, and carried the Ten Tribes captive, *Nahum* might predict the Ruin of *Nineveh*, then the Capital of the *Assyrian* Empire.

I S A I A H xxiii.

SHALMANESER, having taken *Samaria*, turned his Arms against the City of *Tyre*, which held out against him five Years, and then was delivered from the Siege by the
Death

Death of *Shalmaneser*. By this Success they were too much elated, and growing very insolent, this occasioned the Prophecy against them in this Chapter; which foretels the miserable Overthrow of *Tyre*, which was effected by *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. An.* 715, 720.

ISAIAH xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii.

THESE Chapters may refer to the final Desolation of *Judea* and *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*. But I can discover no Marks of the time when they were delivered. However, with the Threatenings he mixes many gracious Promises and Comforts. See Dr. LIGHTFOOT.

ISAIAH xxxviii, xxxix.

IN this Year King *Hezekiah* fell sick, and the other Affairs happened, which are recorded in this Chapter. For 15 Years are added to *Hezekiah's* Life, Chap. xxxviii. 5. and as he reigned in all 29 Years, this must have been the 14th Year of his Reign. And that it happened when the Intentions of *Sennacherib*, King of *Assyria*, to attack *Jerusalem* were known, appears from *Isaiab* xxxviii. 6.

ISAIAH xxix, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv.

HEZEKIAH, having refused to pay the annual Tribute to the King of *Assyria*, towards

wards the End of the 14th Year, *Sennacherib* coming upon him with a numerous Army, he made all Manner of Preparation for a vigorous Defence. *2 Kings* xviii. 13. *2 Chron.* xxxii. *Isai.* xxxvi. Particularly, he entered into an Alliance with the King of *Egypt* and *Ethiopia.* *2 Kings* xviii. 21. *Isai.* xxxvi. 6. This was a Measure displeasing to God, and therefore is protested against by his Prophet *Isaiab* in the xxxth and xxxist Chapters. And at the same time all the other Chapters, from the xxixth to the xxxvith Chapter, especially those that have immediate Reference to this Invasion, might have been dictated to the Prophet by the Spirit of God.

ISAIAH xxii. Verse 1 to 15.

As in this Paragraph are manifest Allusions to *Sennacherib's* Invasion and *Hezekiab's* Preparations for the Defence of *Jerusalem*, (compare Verse 9, 10, 11. *2 Chron.* xxxii. 5, 30.) this prophetick Admonition to the People, who depended too much upon these Preparations, probably was delivered about this time. See *LOWTH's* Comment. on the Place.

ISAIAH xxi.

THE Inhabitants of *Kedar* were the Descendents of *Ishmael*, *Gen.* xxv. 13, and were one Species of *Arabians* dwelling in *Arabia petræa.*

petræa. These were to be ruined within a Year after this Prophecy was given out. Most probably they were overthrown either by *Sennacherib* as he went into, or returned out of *Egypt*; or by *Tirbakab* King of *Ethiopia*, as he advanced out of *Egypt* against *Sennacherib*. 2 *Kin.* xix. 9. And therefore, this Prophecy may be placed at this time, or within a Year or two of it.

ISAIAH xx.

HEZEKIAH, having treated with *Sennacherib*, and agreed to pay him a Sum of Money, 2 *Kings* xviii. 14, 15, 16, *Sennacherib* turned his Arms against *Egypt*; which he greatly distressed for three Years together, *Isa.* xx. 3, 4. But first he sent *Tartan*, one of his Generals, before him to take *Ashdod*, the Key to *Egypt*. At this time the Prophecy against *Egypt*, in the xxth Chapter of *Isaiab*, was delivered. Note—*Sennacherib* is, in Ver. 1, called *Sargon*. Ver. 5. *They, the Jews, shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their Expectation, and of Egypt their Glory.*

ISAIAH xviii, xix.

THESE two Chapters are also leveled against *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*, upon which the *Jews* relied too much; and therefore might be delivered about the same time.

ISAIAH x. Ver. 5, &c. xi, xii, xiii, xiv.
to Ver. 28.

IT appears from Chap. x. 8—12, which is a *Prosopopoeia*, or supposed Speech of the King of *Assyria*, that this Chapter was delivered after the taking of *Samaria* by *Shalmaneser*, 721; and some time before *Sennacherib* besieged *Jerusalem*, 710, who was the only King of *Assyria* that besieged *Jerusalem* after the taking of *Samaria*. And the Speech in this Place bearing a near Affinity to that of *Sennacherib*. 2 Kings xix. 10—14. *Isaiab* xxxvii. 10—14, it is probable that this, and the other Chapters, to the 28th Verse of the xivth Chapter, were delivered about the time *Sennacherib* besieged *Jerusalem*. Note—In Chapter x. 11, *Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria, &c.* *Sennacherib* speaks as King of *Assyria*, and so takes in what his Father *Shalmaneser* had done, as if done by himself.

ISAIAH xxxvi, xxxvii.

SENNACHERIB returning out of *Egypt*, where he had been 3 Years, notwithstanding the Agreement of Peace, which he made with *Hezekiab*, marched his Army again into *Judea*, laid siege to *Lachish*, and from thence sent three of his Generals with a proud and blasphemous Message to *Jerusalem*,

lem, 2 Kings xviii. 17, 18. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 9, &c. This Event, with the Circumstances which attended and followed it, are recorded in the xxxvith and xxxviith Chapters of *Isaiab*.

NOTE—Before *Sennacherib* laid siege to *Jerusalem*, *Tirbakah*, King of *Ethiopia*, advanced against him out of *Egypt*. 2 Kings xix. 9. But, as the Prophet *Isaiab* had predicted, did the *Jews* no Service; for he was overthrown by *Sennacherib*, who after that returned to *Jerusalem*, where his Army being 185000 Men, were all miraculously destroyed in one Night. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* at the Year 710.

IS A I A H xl, xli, xlii, xliii, &c. to the End of the Book.

As there is no Direction to lay these Chapters, or any of them, in any particular time, they may all be allotted to the Eleven last Years of *Hezekiab*'s prolonged Life.

IS A I A H xxii. Ver. 15 to the End.

SHEBNA had been Secretary to King *Hezekiab*, and the good and pious *Eliakim*, the Master of his Household, *Isai.* xxxvi. 3. 22. *Shebna*, by the Questions, Chap. xxii. 16, seems to have been a Foreigner, and not well affected to the jewish Religion. *What hast thou to do here? and whom, what*

Relations *hast thou here?* It is possible this *Shebna*, a Man of great Abilities, might have got the young King *Manasseh*, but 12 Years old, and the whole Management of Affairs, into his own Hands; having routed *Eliakim* by such Arts as Courtiers are wont to practise. For he was now both Treasurer, and Master of the Household. To this, perhaps, the wicked Conduct of *Manasseh* may be assigned. *Shebna*, secure of the Stability and Continuance of his Power and Grandeur, was hewing out a magnificent Sepulchre for himself and Heirs, to perpetuate his Memory to all succeeding times. On this Occasion, *Isaiab* might publish this Prophecy, predicting *Shebnab's* Captivity and Death, in a remote foreign Country, and the future Exaltation of good *Eliakim*. This, which would greatly exasperate *Shebna*, and might occasion *Isaiab's* being put to a cruel Death, [sawn asunder, *Heb. xi. 37.*] was fulfilled about twenty-two Years after, when *Shebna* was taken Captive with *Manasseh* by *Ezrabaddon*, and carried to *Babylon*, where *Shebna* continued all his Life. But *Manasseh*, upon his Repentance, was restored to the Throne of *Judah*. And then, probably, good *Eliakim* was restored, and intrusted with the Management of all his Affairs, and assisted him in the great Reformation he made in Religion. 2 *Chron. xxxiii. 11—17.* See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno 677. Manasseh 22.*

JEREMIAH i, ii.

IN this Year *Jeremiah*, in the Council of God, received his prophetic Commission, as in the first Chapter. See also Chap. xxv. 3. And in this Year probably he published the Admonitions, Warnings, and Threatenings, in the second Chapter.

JEREMIAH xi, Verse 1—18.

THE Prophet, Ver. 2—9, most probably refers to the Covenant, which *Josiah* publicly made to keep God's Commandments, upon finding the Book of the Law. 2 *Kings* xxii. 11. xxiii. 3. This was in the 18th Year of King *Josiah*. 2 *Kings* xxii. 3.

JEREMIAH iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xii, &c. to the xxi.

THESE Chapters, for any thing that appears to the contrary, do lie in regular Order, nor have we any Ground or Intimation for transposing any of them. There is a Date, Chap. iii. 6, *In the Days of Josiah*, without mentioning the Year of his Reign; which, however, shews, that that Chapter was delivered in some Part of his Reign. And whereas a severe Drought is frequently mentioned in several of these Chapters, (*viz.* Chap. iii. 3. v. 24, 25. viii. 13, 20. ix. 10, 12. xii. 4. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.) this shews, that they

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are to be laid together in the same Year, or Years, in which the Drought continued ; and all the rest, to the xxist, may follow in order of time ; and all might be delivered in the last Years of King *Josiah*. Dr. LIGHTFOOT.

JEREMIAH xi, Ver. 18, to the End.

IN some Part of the same Years the Men of *Anathoth* might conspire against *Jeremiah*.

HABAKKUK i, ii, iii. ZEPHANIAH i, ii, iii.

As these two Prophets prophesied the same things, that *Jeremiah* did, and upon the same Occasion, that is, Destruction and Desolation upon *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, because of the many heinous Sins they were guilty of, they might prophesy about this time.

JEREMIAH xxii. Ver. 1—24.

JEREMIAH being sent of God to the King's House, there proclaimed God's Judgments against him and his Family, contained in these Verses of this Chapter. This was soon after *Jehoahaz*, or *Shallum*, was carried captive into *Egypt*, by *Pharaoh-necho*, King of *Egypt*, who slew *Josiah*, Ver. 10, 11. *Weep not for the Dead, Josiah, but weep sore for him that goeth away, Jehoahaz ; for*
he

he shall return no more. Note—*Jeboabaz* reigned but 3 Months.

J E R E M I A H xxvi.

AFTER that, the Prophet was ordered to go to the Temple, and to denounce to all the People the Judgments of God, if they did not repent. By this he was brought in Danger of his Life, through the Resentment of the Priests and Prophets, *Ver. 7, 8*; but was preserved by the Princes, *Ver. 16*.

J E R E M I A H xxv.

IN this Chapter, and in the Beginning of this Year, *Jeremiah* prophesied of the coming of *Nebuchadnezzar* against *Judah* and *Jerusalem*.

J E R E M I A H xxxv.

THE *Reckabites*, upon *Nebuchadnezzar's* beginning to invade the Land of *Judea*, retired out of the Country to *Jerusalem*, where *Jeremiah* found them, in this Chapter.

J E R E M I A H xlvi.

IN the same Year, after *Nebuchadnezzar* had defeated the Army of *Pharaoh-necho*, this Prophecy relating to the Gentiles, was delivered.

J E R E M I A H xxxvi. Ver. 1—9.

IN the same Year God commanded *Jeremiah* to collect, and write in a Roll, all the Words of Prophecy, which had been spoken by him against *Israel* and *Judah*, and against the Nations. Which he executed by the Assistance of *Baruch*, his *Amanuensis*; who, as *Jeremiah* was then under Confinement, *Ver.* 5, read the Roll in the Temple upon the Fasting-day, *i. e.* the great Day of Atonement, being the 10th of the seventh Month.

J E R E M I A H xlv.

BARUCH being very much affrighted at the Threats contained in the Roll, and probably uneasy under Apprehensions of the Danger he might incur by reading it publicly, *Jeremiah*, by the Command of God, delivered to him the Message of Encouragement and Comfort contained in this Chapter.

D A N I E L i.

IMMEDIATELY after this, *Nebuchadnezzar*, who set out upon his Expedition the Year before, laid Siege to *Jerusalem*, and took it; and bound *Jeboiakim* in Fetters, with a Design to carry him to *Babylon*. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 6. But upon *Jeboiakim's* Submission, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 1, he did not car-

ry

ry him to *Babylon*, but restored him to the Kingdom. Nevertheless, he carried great Numbers of the People, and Sons of the royal Family, and of the Nobility, Captives, among the rest *Daniel*.

JEREMIAH xxxvi. Verse 9. to the
End of the Chapter.

THIS Year, after the *Chaldeans* were gone from *Jerusalem*, *Jeboiakim*, and his People growing worse and worse, in the ninth Month, at the Fast, which was then proclaimed, on Account of *Nebuchadnezzar's* having taken the City the Year before, *Baruch* again read the Roll in the House of the Lord, *Ver. 9, 10.* Which coming to the King's Ear, and Part of the Roll being read to him, he, thinking perhaps, that *Nebuchadnezzar* had already executed the divine Threatenings, and nothing more was now to be feared, and that the Prophet was a malicious, troublesome Fellow, burnt the Roll, and commanded *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* to be apprehended. But they could not be found, for the Lord hid them. Note—*Jeremiah* was now at Liberty.

DANIEL ii.

IN this Year, which was the second of *Nebuchadnezzar*, according to the *Babylonish* Account, the 4th according to the *Jewish*,
Daniel

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Daniel revealed to *Nebuchadnezzar* his Dream.

JEREMIAH xxii. Ver. 24, to the End.

IN this Year this Prophecy was declared against *Jehoiachin*, or *Coniah*, who reigned but 3 Months, and then, with many others, was carried into Captivity. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 11, &c. His Uncle *Zedekiah* succeeded him. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 17.

JEREMIAH xxiii.

This Chapter might be delivered at the same time with the foregoing Prophecy.

JEREMIAH xiii. Ver. 15, to the End.

By the King and Queen mentioned *Ver.* 18, are probably meant *Jehoiachin* and his Mother. See Chap. xxii. 26. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12. Thus, this Prophecy must have been delivered about the same time with the foregoing.

JEREMIAH xxiv.

AFTER *Jehoiachin* or *Jeconiah* was carried into Captivity by *Nebuchadnezzar*, this Prophecy was delivered.

JEREMIAH xlix. Verse 34, to the End.

IN this Year also is to be placed the Prophecy against *Elam*, a Kingdom upon the River

River *Ulai*, eastward beyond the *Tigris*, in which stood *Skuskan*, afterward the Metropolis of the Kingdom of *Persia*.

JEREMIAH xxix.

ABOUT the second Year of *Zedekiah's* Reign, *Jeremiah's* Letter, contained in this Chapter, was sent to the captive Jews at *Babylon*; and an impious Answer returned by *Shemaiah*.

JEREMIAH xxx, xxxi.

THESE two Chapters, which assure the captive Jews, that they should not only return again to *Judea*, but also be the particular Care of the divine Providence to the End of the World, to shew the Certainty of the encouraging Contents, are ordered to be written in a Book, Chap. xxx. 2, about the same time with the foregoing Letter, and probably were sent to the captive Jews in *Babylon*, whom they principally respected.

JEREMIAH xxvii.

THIS Chapter is to be placed in this Year, (See Chap. xxviii. 1.) namely, after the Departure of *Nebuchadnezzar* out of *Judea* and *Syria*, when the Kings of the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Edomites*, *Zidonians*, *Tyrians*, &c. sent an Embassy to *Zedekiah*, proposing to him a League against the King of *Babylon*.

Note—

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Note—In the first Verse, *Jehoiakim* is put for *Zedekiah*, [See Ver. 3.] probably by a Mistake of the Transcriber, who might then have his Eye upon the first Verse of the foregoing Chapter.

JEREMIAH xxviii.

IN this Year the Affair concerning *Hananiah* the false Prophet, related in this Chapter was transacted. Note—The first Verse, according to the best Commentators, should be read thus, *When it had been so*, [i. e. when I had continued prophesying with a Yoke upon my Shoulders from that Year, which was] *in the Beginning of the Reign of Zedekiah, until the fourth Year, &c.* See *Glass. Phil. sacra Lib. IV. Tract. I. Observ. V. Pag. 860. Nold. Concord. Nota 677*, and *Lowth* upon the Place.

JEREMIAH I, li.

THESE two Chapters contain a Book of Prophecies, which *Jeremiah* wrote, and sent to *Babylon*, by *Seraiah*, who was sent thither by *Zedekiah*, in the 4th Year of his Reign, Chap. li. 59, &c. [*when he went with, rather, from Zedekiah, &c.*] See *Nold. Concord.* under יְרֵמְיָהוּ or יְרֵמְיָהוּ No. 1,

EZEKIEL i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

In the 5th Year of *Jehoiachin's* Captivity, which was also the 5th of *Zedekiah's* Reign,
Ezekiel,

Ezekiel, a captive Priest in *Chaldea*, received his prophetic Commission in the Council of God, and had the Revelations and Prophecies contained in the seven first Chapters of his Book. Note—*Ezekiel* dates his Prophecies from the Year in which himself and King *Jeboiachin* were carried into Captivity.

E Z E K I E L viii, ix, x, xi.

THIS Year *Ezekiel* in a Vision was carried to *Jerusalem*, shewn the several Sorts of Idolatry practised there by the *Jews* in the very Temple; and had revealed unto him the Punishments which God would inflict upon them for those Abominations, and the divine Protection of those in Captivity, who continued steady and faithful to his Service.

E Z E K I E L xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix.

ABOUT this time, *Zedekiah* having entered into a Confederacy with the King of *Egypt*, and broken the solemn Oath of Fidelity, which he had sworn to King *Nebuchadnezzar*, God, both by Types and Words of Revelation, foreshewed to *Ezekiel* the taking of *Jerusalem* by the *Chaldeans*, *Zedekiah's* Flight by Night, the putting out of his Eyes, his Imprisonment and Death at *Babylon*, the carrying away of the *Jews*, and the Remains of the *Israelites*, contained in the above-

350 PROPHETS *before the CAPTIVITY.*

bove-mentioned Chapters. Note—*Daniel*, though then but a young Man, was grown to such a Pitch of Piety and Holiness, as to be matched by God himself, with *Noah* and *Job*. Ezek. xiv. 14, 20.

EZEKIEL xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii.

THE Elders of *Israel* came to *Ezekiel* to enquire of the Lord; but God refuseth to be enquired of by such wicked Hypocrites; and in these four Chapters denounces the Judgments their abominable Impieties deserved.

JEREMIAH xxi, xxxiv. Ver. 1—8.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR having advanced a great Army against *Judea*, 2 Kin. xxv. 1, to punish *Zedekiah* for his Perjury and Rebellion, *Zedekiah* first sent *Pashur* and *Zephaniah* to *Jeremiah*, to desire him to enquire of the Lord; by whom *Jeremiah* returned the Answer related in the 21st Chapter. Afterward, *Jeremiah* was ordered in Person to deliver to *Zedekiah* the Prediction contained in Chap. xxiv. 1—8.

JEREMIAH xlvii.

PHARAOH-HOPHRA marching out of *Egypt* to the Relief of his Ally *Zedekiah* against *Nebuchadnezzar*, who was advancing to besiege *Jerusalem*, in his Way took *Ga-*

ga, a Town of the Philistines. A little before this Event, *Jeremiah* uttered this Prophecy against the *Philistines*.

JEREMIAH xlviii, xlix, Ver. 1—34.

THESE Prophecies, relating to the *Moa-bites*, *Ammonites*, *Edomites*, &c. who would be obnoxious to the Ravages of the *Affyrian* Armies, might be delivered at the same time with the former.

EZEKIEL xxiv, xxv.

ON the tenth Day of the tenth Month in the same Year, when *Nebuchadnezzar's* Army had laid Siege to *Jerusalem*, the same was revealed, on the very same Day, to *Ezekiel* in *Chaldea*; and the Destruction of the City was typified by a boiling Caldron; the same Day also his Wife died, as recorded in Chap. xxiv. But Vengeance is denounced against the neighbouring Countries, that rejoiced in the preceding Calamities, or should rejoice in those that were to come upon *Judea*, Chap. xxv.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 1—11.

NOT long after *Nebuchadnezzar's* Army had laid Siege to *Jerusalem*, *Pharaoh-Hopbra* came with a great Force to the Relief of *Zedekiah*. Upon which *Nebuchadnezzar* raised the Siege of *Jerusalem* in order to march
against

352 PROPHETS *before the CAPTIVITY.*

against him. Upon which *Zedekiah* sent a Message to *Jeremiah*, before he was put into Prison, Chap. xxxvii. 4, the Answer to which is contained in Chap. xxxvii. 1—11.

JEREMIAH xxxiv. Ver. 8. to the End.

UPON the Approach of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Army, the terrified Jews entered into a solemn Covenant, to observe God's Law, and to release the Hebrew Servants, which they kept in Bondage contrary to his Law. But when the *Chaldeans* were gone to meet *Pharaoh*, the general Opinion being, that they would return no more, the Jews openly violated the Covenant of Reformation, by obliging all their Servants to return to their former Servitude. For which impious Act, the Prophet *proclaimed Liberty to the Sword*, &c.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 11—16.

WHEN the *Chaldeans* were gone to meet *Pharaoh*, *Jeremiah* was released out of Prison; and intending to retire to *Anathoth*, from the Calamities of the Siege, which he knew would be renewed, was taken up for a Deserter as he was passing through the Gate, and clapt in Prison; but principally for persisting, that the City should again be besieged and taken by *Nebuchadnezzar*.

J E R E-

JEREMIAH xxxii. xxxiii.

WHILE *Jeremiah* was in Prison, the Contents of these Chapters were transacted.

EZEKIEL xxix. Ver. 1—17. xxx.

UPON the Approach of the *Chaldeans*, the *Egyptians* treacherously deserted *Zedekiah*, and returned into their own Country. Upon this Occasion, *Ezekiel* denounces the Displeasure of God against their Perfidy, predicts their Desolation, and at length, (within 40 Years, Chap. xxix. 13.) their being reduced to one of the basest of Nations, inso- much that they should no more have a Prince of their own to reign over them. Chap. xxx. 13. Which hath been remarkably fulfilled, even unto this Day. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad Annum* 589. *Zedekiah* 10.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 17 to the End.

ON the Retreat of the *Egyptians*, *Nebuchadnezzar* returned to the Siege of *Jerusalem*; and it was then King *Zedekiah*, fearing the Issue, sent for *Jeremiah* out of Prison to consult him.

JEREMIAH xxxviii. Ver. 1—14.

THE Princes, offended at *Jeremiah*, cast him into a low, loathsome, miry Dungeon, where he must have perished, had not *Ebed-melech* gained leave to draw him out, and to place

A a

him

354 PROPHETS *before the* CAPTIVITY.

him in a better Situation in the Court of the Prison.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 15 to the End.

WHILE *Jeremiah* was in the Court of the Prison, God by him sent a Message of Mercy and Deliverance to *Ebed-melech*.

JEREMIAH xxxviii. Ver. 14 to the End.

ZEDEKIAH again sent for *Jeremiah* out of the Court of the Prison into the Temple, there secretly to enquire of him about the Issue of the Siege.

EZEKIEL xxvi. xxvii. xxviii.

HERE God declares his Judgments against *Tyre*, for insulting the calamitous State of *Jerusalem*, closely besieged by *Nebuchadnezzar*. Note—*Daniel's* Wisdom, though but about 36, was become famous over all the East. *Chap.* xxviii. 3.

EZEKIEL xxxi.

God declares his Judgments against *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 1—11. lii.
Ver. 1—30.

THE Account of *Jerusalem's* being taken, with the subsequent Circumstances. Upon this

PROPHETS *after the Destruction &c.* 355
this Occasion the 137th Psalm was composed.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 11—15. xl.
Ver. 1—7.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR giveth Charge concerning *Jeremiah* to *Nebuzaradan*; who treateth him in a kind and friendly Manner.

JEREMIAH xl. Ver. 7. to the End.
xli. xlii. xliii. Ver. 1—8.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR makes *Gedaliab* Governor of *Judea*. *Ishmael* slays him. *Johanan*, &c. by Force carry *Jeremiah* into *Egypt*.

C H A P. XXXV.

PROPHETS *after the Destruction of the TEMPLE, during the CAPTIVITY.*

JEREMIAH xliii. Ver. 8. to the End.
xliv.

THE Prophecies contained in these Chapters were revealed, and published to the *Jews*, in the Land of *Egypt*.

The Book of LAMENTATIONS.

THIS Book, which mournfully bewails the Desolation of *Jerusalem*, and the Temple, was composed by *Jeremiah* after that sad Event, possibly, in the Land of *Egypt*;

356 PROPHETS *after the Destruction*

where *Jeremiah* might end his Days ; for we never hear of his Return from thence.

E Z E K I E L xxxiii.

THE begining of this Chapter is upon a general Subject, and of uncertain Date. From the 21st Verse it is dated from the time, when *Ezekiel* first received the News of the City's being taken and destroyed, which was 18 Months, or a Year and a half, after the sad Event happened.

E Z E K I E L xxxii.

THIS Prophecy against *Egypt* was delivered in this Year and Month.

E Z E K I E L xxxiv. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix.

THESE Chapters fall under no Date, till we come to the 40th Chapter, which is dated the 25th of *Jehoiachin's* Captivity. Therefore, these Chapters were probably delivered some time between the 12th and 25th of that Captivity.

O B A D I A H.

O B A D I A H prophesied against the *Edomites* for their unnatural and spiteful Behaviour towards the *Jews*, in their Distress at the taking of *Jerusalem*.

E Z E K I E L

E Z E K I E L xxxv.

THIS Prophecy against the *Edomites* seems to have been delivered upon the same Occasion.

D A N I E L iii.

IN this Year also *Nebuchadnezzar* set up his golden Image. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno 587. Nebuchad. 18.*

E Z E K I E L xl. xli. &c. to the End of the Book.

ALL these Visions and Prophecies, relating to the future State of the Church of God, were revealed to *Ezekiel* this Year, being the 14th from the Destruction of *Jerusalem*.

E Z E K I E L xxix. Ver. 17. to the End.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR's Army having endured great Hardships in the Siege of *Tyre*, which held 13 Years, and having got little on the taking of it, (the Inhabitants having conveyed themselves and their Effects into the adjacent Island) God, by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, promiseth them the Spoils of *Egypt*, as a Reward for their Labor. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An. 573. Nebuchad. 32.*

D A N I E L iv.

THIS Year *Nebuchadnezzar* had his Dream of the wonderful great Tree, and the cutting

A a 3

down

358 PROPHETS *after the Destruction*
down thereof; and the next Year fell distracted, See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 570,

JEREMIAH lii. Ver. 31. to the End.

THIS Year *Nebuchadnezzar* dies, and is succeeded by his Son, *Evil-merodach*, who released *Jehoiachin*, King of *Judah*, out of Prison, where he had been confined 37 Years, and advanced him to Honor and Friendship. Note — This last Chapter was not wrote by *Jeremiah* (See *Chap.* li. 64.) but by *Baruch* or *Ezra*, or whoever collected *Jeremiah's* Prophecies into one Volume.

DANIEL vii.

DANIEL had the Vision of the four Monarchies, and of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*.

DANIEL viii.

DANIEL had the Vision of the Ram and He-goat.

DANIEL v.

DANIEL reads the Hand-writing on the Wall. *Belsazzar* is slain, *Darius* the *Mede* took the *Assyrian* Kingdom.

DANIEL vi.

DANIEL's being advanced by *Darius* above all the Princes, and made prime Minister,
next

next to the King, raised so great an Envy against him among the Courtiers, that they laid the Snare for him, which brought him to the Lion's Den.

DANIEL ix.

DANIEL, apprehending from the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, that the 70 Years Captivity of *Judah* were drawing to an End, maketh his Prayer to God for the Restoration of *Jerusalem*. In Answer to which, the Angel *Gabriel*, was sent to assure him of a much greater Redemption to the *Jewish* Nation by the *Messiah*, at the End of 70 Weeks, or 490 Years.

EZRA i. ii.

DARIUS dieth ; *Cyrus* succeeds him, and by his Decree puts an End to the 70 Years Captivity of the *Jews*. This in the first Chapter of *Ezra*. In the second Chapter an Account is given of the *Jews* that returned. Note — On the Return of *Judah* and *Benjamin* from the Babylonish Captivity, several of the other Tribes of *Israel* returned with them out of *Assyria*, *Babylon*, and *Media*, whither they had been before carried. *Ezra* vi. 17. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 536. P. 190. Upon this joyous Occasion the 126th Psalm was composed.

E Z R A iii.

THE *Jews* begin to rebuild *Jerusalem* and the Temple.

C H A P. XXXVI.

PROPHETS *after the* CAPTIVITY *under the*
second TEMPLE.

E Z R A iv.

THE *Samaritans* obstruct the *Jews* in the Building of the City and Temple. And so the Work ceased till the second Year of *Darius Hystaspes* ; namely, for 14 Years.

D A N I E L x. xi. xii.

THE Visions and Prophecies in these Chapters were revealed to *Daniel* in the third Year of *Cyrus*, and the third Year after the Captivity.

H A G G A I i. Ver. 1—12.

HAGGAI excites *Zerubbabel*, the Governor, and *Jeskua*, the High-Priest, to build the Lord's House, in the second Year of *Darius Hystaspes*.

HAGGAI i. Ver. 12. to the End. E Z R A
v. 1, 2.

ZERUBBABEL and *Jeskua* immediately apply to the Work.

H A G G A I

H A G G A I ii. Ver. 1—10.

HAGGAI incourages them from the Lord to proceed.

Z E C H A R I A H i. Ver. 1—7.

ZECHARIAH makes his first Address to the *Jews*, who were building the Temple, assuring them that God would turn to them with a Blessing, if they turned to him by Repentance and Reformation.

H A G G A I ii. Ver. 10, to the End.

HAGGAI rebukes the Indifference of the *Jews* in building the Temple; incourages vigorous Endeavours with the Blessing of Plenty; and assures *Zerubbabel* of the extraordinary Favor of God.

Z E C H A R I A H i. Ver. 7. to the End.
ii. iii. iv. v. vi.

AT this time these Visions, greatly incouraging the *Jews* in building the City and Temple, and assuring them of the divine Protection against all their Enemies, were revealed to *Zechariah*.

E Z R A v. Ver. 3. to the End.

THE *Samaritans* again disturb the *Jews*, and put a Stop to the Building of the Temple.

E Z R A

E Z R A vi. Ver. 1—15.

DARIUS sends a Decree to *Jerusalem* positively ordering the Temple to be rebuilt, and the Expences of it furnished out of the Taxes of the Provinces. Which accordingly was done, till it was finished. See Dr. PRI-DEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 518.

Z E C H A R I A H vii. viii.

THE *Jews*, who were in *Babylon*, (for great Numbers still remained there, and in other Parts of the *Persian Empire*,) judging that the State of *Judea* and *Jerusalem* was now so thoroughly restored and established by *Darius's* Decree, that it might be no longer proper to keep the Fast in the fifth Month, (when the City and Temple were burnt by *Nebuzaradan*) which they had hitherto observed for 70 Years together, sent two Messengers to *Jerusalem*, to ask the Opinion of the Priests and Prophets, that were there, about this Matter. And God gave them, by the Prophet *Zechariab*, the Answer relating to that, and other Fasts, which we have in the seventh and eighth Chapters of his Prophecy.

Z E C H A R I A H ix. x. xi. xii. xiii. xiv.

As these Chapters have no Date, we may suppose they were delivered in some of the
times

times subsequent to the fourth Year of *Darius Hystaspes*.

E Z R A vi. Ver. 15. to the End.

THIS Year the Temple was finished, and dedicated with great Joy and Solemnity. The *Jews* had been about it from first to last 20 Years.

E S T H E R i.

ARTAXERXES, or *Abasuerus*, being thoroughly settled in his Throne, made a great Feast for all his Nobles, and divorced *Vashti* his Queen.

E S T H E R ii. Ver. 1—16.

A Collection of Virgins made for the King, of which *Esther* was one.

E Z R A vii. viii. ix. x.

IN the Begining of this Year *Ezra* received from *Artaxerxes*, or *Abasuerus*, a very ample Commission, for his Return to *Jerusalem*, with any of his Countreymen, that were disposed to go along with him ; giving them full Authority in things both civil and religious, to regulate both according to the Law. This Decree was probably granted at the Solicitation of *Esther*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 458. The Decree, the Families and Numbers of the *Jews*, that went with *Ezra* to *Jerusalem*, fall within the Compass
of

364 PROPHETS *after the CAPTIVITY*,
of this and the next Year, and are contained
in the four last Chapters of this Book.

NOTE — From *Ezra's* entering upon this
Work, the Beginning of *Daniel's* 70 Weeks
is to be computed. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad*
An. 458. P. 377. Note also — That *Ezra*
continued in the Government about 13
Years ; till *Nebemiah* succeeded him in the
20th Year of *Artaxerxes*, or *Abasuerus*.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 16—21.

ESTHER, after having been only Concu-
bine about two Years, is now made Queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 21. to the End.

BIGTHAN and *Tarefb*, two Eunuchs in
the Palace, entered into a Conspiracy against
the Life of *Artaxerxes*, or *Abasuerus*, which
was discovered to the King by *Mordecai*,
Queen *Esther's* Uncle.

ESTHER iii. iv. v, &c. to the End of the Book.

HAMAN, an *Amalekite*, descended from
King *Agag*, in *Saul's* time, made prime Mi-
nister to *Artaxerxes*, laid a Plot to extirpate
the whole Race of the *Jews*. But it turned
upon himself, as related in the Book of
Esther.

NEHE-

NEHEMIAH i. ii. iii, &c. to the End
of the Book.

NEHEMIAH, with a Commission from *Artaxerxes*, or *Abasuerus*, probably by Favor of Queen *Esther*, (Neh. ii. 6.) succeedeth *Ezra* in the Government of *Judea*, rebuilds the Walls, repeoples *Jerusalem*, reforms Disorders, &c. Thus he was employed for 12 Years ; namely, from the 20th to the 32^d Year of *Artaxerxes*, Neh. v. 14. xiii. 6. Within which time *Ezra* is supposed to have published his Edition of the Hebrew-Scriptures. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* P. 475, &c.

NEHEMIAH returns from *Jerusalem* to the *Persian Court*. Neh. xiii. 6.

MALACHI i. ii. iii. iv.

ABOUT this time flourished *Malachi*, the Prophet. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 428. P. 570.

NEHEMIAH xiii. Ver. 6, 7, &c.

AFTER certain Days, i. e. after about five Years, *Nehemiah* comes again to *Jerusalem* with a new Commission, and makes further Reformation. With which Act of Reformation, the holy Scriptures of the Old Testament are closed up.

SIMON the just, High-Priest of the *Jews*, compleats the Canon of the Old Testament, by adding the *two Books of Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Esther*, and *Malachi*. “ That these
 “ could not be put into the Canon by *Ezra*
 “ is plain. For four of those Books are
 “ upon just Grounds, supposed to have been
 “ written by *Ezra* himself, (that is, the *two*
 “ *Books of Chronicles*, and the Books of *Ezra*
 “ and *Esther*,) and the Book of *Nehemiah*
 “ was written after his [*Ezra's*] time ; and
 “ so most likely was the Book of *Malachi*
 “ also. And therefore a later time must be
 “ assigned for their Insertion into the sacred
 “ Canon ; and none is more likely, than
 “ that of *Simon the just*, who is said to have
 “ been the last of the Men of the great
 “ Synagogue. What the *Jews* call the great
 “ Synagogue, were a Number of Elders
 “ amounting to 120, succeeding each other
 “ in a continued Series from the Return of
 “ the *Jews* from the *Babylonish* Captivity,
 “ to the time of *Simon the just*, and labored
 “ in restoring the *Jewish* Church and State
 “ in that Country. In order to which, the
 “ holy Scriptures being the Rule they were
 “ to go by, their chief Care and Study was
 “ to make a true Collection of those Scrip-
 “ tures, and publish them accurately to the
 “ People. *Ezra*, and the Men of the great
 “ Synagogue in his time, settled the Canon
 “ of all but the foresaid Books ; and those
 “ were

“ were probably settled, and added to the
 “ Canon, in the times of *Simon the just*, who
 “ died about 31 Years after *Alexander the*
 “ *great*. For in 1 *Chron.* iii. 19, &c. the
 “ Genealogy of the Sons of *Zerubbabel* is
 “ carried down for so many Descents after
 “ him as may well be thought to reach the
 “ times of *Alexander*. And in *Neb.* xii. 22.
 “ we have the Days of *Jaddua* spoken of,
 “ as then past ; but *Jaddua* outlived *Alex-*
 “ *ander* two Years. These Passages, there-
 “ fore, were probably inserted by *Simon*
 “ *the just*, who perfected, and finally
 “ settled the Canon of the holy Scriptures.
 “ After this followed the *mishnical* times,
 “ that is, the times of Traditions. Hitherto
 “ the Scriptures were the only Rule of Faith
 “ and Manners, which God’s People studied ;
 “ but thenceforth Traditions began to be
 “ regarded, till at length they overbore the
 “ Word of God itself, as we find in our
 “ Saviour’s time. The Collection of these
 “ Traditions they call the *Mishnab*, that is,
 “ the second Law ; and those who delivered
 “ and taught them were stiled the *mishnical*
 “ Doctors.” See Dr. PRIDEAUX’s *Con. Anno*
 292. *Ptolemy Soter* 13. *

* TURN to the Appendix, for the Chronological Dates
 belonging to this and Chapters xxxiv. xxxv.

C H A P. XXXVII.

The State of the JEWS, and of other NATIONS, at the time when our Lord came into the World.

AFTER the *Babylonish* Captivity the *Jews* no more lapsed into Idolatry, but remained steady in the Acknowledgment and Worship of the one living and true God. Even then they fell into new Ways of perverting Religion, and the wise and holy Intentions of the divine Law. I. By laying all the Stress on the external and less momentous Parts of it, while they neglected the weighty and substantial, true Holiness of Heart and Life. Mankind are too easily drawn into this Error. While they retain a Sense of Religion, they are too apt to listen to any Methods by which it may be reduced to a Consistency with the Gratifications of their Passions, Pride, and Avarice. Thus, by placing Religion in mere Profession, or in the zealous Observance of Rites and Ceremonies, instead of real Piety, Truth, Purity, and Goodness, they learn to be religious without Virtue. II. By speculating and commenting upon the divine Commands and Institutions, till their Force is quite enervated, and they are refined into a Sense that
will

will commodiously allow a slight Regard instead of sincere Obedience. III. By confirming and establishing the two former Methods of corrupting Religion, by Tradition and the Authority of learned Rabbies. Pretending, that there was a System of religious Rules delivered by Word of Mouth from *Moses*, explanatory of the written Law, known only to those Rabbies ; to whose Judgment, therefore, and Decision, all the People were to submit.

THIS, in time, the Space of 219 Years, became the general State of Religion among the *Jews*, after they had discarded Idolatry. And this Spirit prevailed among them for some Ages, (290 Years) before the Coming of the *Messiah*. But, however, it did not interfere with the main System of Providence, or the introducing the Knowledge of God among the Nations, as they still continued stedfast in the Worship of the true God, without Danger of deviating from it. Besides, they were now, much more than formerly, exercised in reading, thinking, and reasoning, and were more capable of themselves of judging what was right. *Luke xii. 57*. And several of them did so judge. Some of them were truly religious and virtuous ; and all of them had strong Expectation of the *Messiah* about the time of his Appearance ; and were sufficiently qualified to judge of religious

Matters, and of the Evidences of his Mission. Thus the *Jews* were prepared by the preceeding Dispensation for the Reception of the *Messiah*, and the just Notions of Religion, which he was sent to inculcate ; in-somuch that their Guilt must be highly aggravated if they rejected him and his Instructions. It could not be for want of Capacity, but of Integrity, and must be assigned to wilful Blindness and Obduracy. Out of Regard to temporal Power, Grandeur, and Enjoyments, they loved Darkness rather than Light.

IN the mean time, the Pagan Nations had made great Openings in Wisdom and Virtue. Those Arts that began in *Greece*, had traveled into other Lands ; Learning had got footing among the illiterate ; and Humanity and social Affections among the barbarous ; and many good and useful Books, useful even to this Day among Christians, were written in Ethics for the right Conduct of Life. The Light of Nature was carried high ; or rather, the Darkness of it was much enlightened. Such was, at length, the State of the *Gentiles*, God having still been pleased, from time to time, to raise up among them Persons uncommonly endowed, for their Instruction, and to fit them for the Day, when he should more explicitly reveal himself, and his sacred Will to them. In a
Word,

Word, what with Time, and the transmitting of Knowledge from Region to Region, and the Labors of Poets and Philosophers, Men, at about the *classic Æra*, when our Lord came into the World, in general, had gained tolerable just Ideas of Virtue and moral Truth ; and so, were in a Condition to apprehend and embrace the higher and more important Truths of God, and his Providence, and a future State.

FOR many Ages the *Jews* had been well known in the eastern Empires, among the *Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians* ; but, till the time of *Alexander the great*, they had no Communication with the *Grecians*. About the Year before Christ 332, *Alexander* built *Alexandria* in *Egypt* ; and to people his new City, removed thither many of the *Jews*, allowing them the Use of their own Laws and Religion, and the same Liberties with the *Macedonians* themselves. The *Macedonians*, who spake the *Greek* Language, and other *Greeks*, were the principal Inhabitants of *Alexandria*. From them the *Jews* learned to speak *Greek*, which was the common Language of the City, and which soon became the native Language of the *Jews*, that lived there ; who, on that Account, were called *Hellenists*, or *Greek-Jews*, mentioned *Acts* vi. 1—9. xi. 20. These *Greek-Jews* had Synagogues in *Alexandria* ; and for their Benefit, the five Books of *Moses*,

which alone, at first, were publicly read, were translated into *Greek*, (by whom is uncertain) and read in their Synagogues every Sabbath-Day. And in the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, about 168 Years before *Christ*, when the Prophets also began to be read in the Synagogues of *Judea*, the Prophets also were translated into *Greek* for the Use of the *Alexandrian* Jews. This Translation contributed much to the Spread of the Knowledge of true Religion among the Nations in the western Parts of the World.

FOR the *Jews*, their Synagogues and Worship, were, after *Alexander's* Death, dispersed almost every where among the Nations. *Ptolemy*, one of *Alexander's* Successors, having reduced *Jerusalem* and all *Judea*, about 320 Years before *Christ*, carried a hundred thousand *Jews* into *Egypt*, and there raised considerable Numbers of them to Places of Trust and Power ; and several of them he placed in *Cyrene* and *Libya*. *Seleucus*, another of *Alexander's* Successors, about 300 Years before *Christ*, built *Antioch* in *Cilicia*, and many other Cities, in all 35, and some of them capital Cities in the greater and lesser *Asia* ; in all which he planted the *Jews*, giving them equal Privileges and Immunities with the *Greeks* and *Macedonians* ; especially at *Antioch* in *Syria*, where they settled in great Numbers, and became almost as considerable a Part of that City, as they

they were at *Alexandria*. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno 293*. *Ptolemy Soter 12*. On that memorable Day of *Pentecost*, *Acts ii. 5, 9, 11, 12*. were assembled in *Jerusalem*, *Jews*, *devout Men*, out of every Nation under Heaven ; namely, *Parthians*, *Medes*, and *Persians* of the Province of *Elymais*, Inhabitants of *Mesopotamia*, *Judea*, *Cappadocia*, *Pontus*, *Asia*, *Phrygia*, *Pamphylia*, *Egypt*, *Cyrene* in *Lybia*, *Rome*, *Cretes*, and *Arabs*, who were all either natural *Jews*, or devout Men, *i. e.* Profelytes to the *Jewish* Religion. And in every City of the *Roman* Empire, where *Paul* preached, he found a Body of his Countreymen, the *Jews* ; except in *Athens*, which was, at that time, I suppose, a Town of no considerable Trade. Which shews that the *Jews*, and their Synagogues, at the time of our Lord's Appearance, were providentially scattered over all the *Roman* Empire ; and had in every Place introduced, more or less, among the Nations, the Knowledge and Worship of God ; and so had prepared great Numbers for the Reception of the Gospel.

ABOUT the time that *Alexander* built *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, the Use of the *Papyrus* for writing was first found out in that Country. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno 332*. *Darius 4*. P. 706. Vol. II. This Invention was so favorable to Literature, that *Ptolemy Soter*, one of *Alexander's* Successors^{le}nds

was thereby enabled to erect a *Museum*, or Library ; which by his Son and Successor, *Philadelphus*, who died 247 Years before *Christ*, was augmented to an hundred thousand Volumes ; and by succeeding *Ptolemies* to seven hundred thousand. Part of this Library, which was placed in a separate Building from the other Part, happened to be burnt when *Julius Cæsar* laid Siege to *Alexandria* ; but after that Loss, it was again much augmented, and soon grew up to be larger, and of more eminent Note, than the former ; and so it continued for many Ages to be of great Fame, and Use in those Parts, till at length it was burnt and finally destroyed by the *Saracens*, in the Year of our Lord 642. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* Vol. III. P. 21, &c. Anno 284. This plainly proves how much the Invention of turning the *Papyrus* into *Paper* contributed to the Increase of Books, and the Advancement of Learning for some Ages before the Coming of our Lord. For doubtless, by this Means, private Hands would also more easily be supplied with Books than before.

ADD to all this, that the World, after many Changes and Revolutions, was, by God's all-ruling Wisdom, thrown into that Form of civil Affairs, which best suited with the great intended Alteration. The many petty States and Tyrannies, whose Passions and Bigotry might have run counter to the
Schemes

Schemes of Providence, were all swallowed up in one great Power, the *Romans*; to which all Appeals lay; the Seat of which, *Rome*, lay at a great Distance from *Jerusalem*, the Spring from whence the Gospel was to arise, and flow to all Nations. And therefore, as no material Obstruction to the Gospel could arise, but from that one Quarter, none could suddenly arise from thence, but only in Process of time, when the Gospel was sufficiently spread and established, as it did not in the least interfere with the *Roman* Polity or Government. The Gospel was first published in a time of general Peace and Tranquility throughout the whole World, which gave the Preachers of it an Opportunity of passing freely from one Country to another, and the Minds of Men the Advantage of attending calmly to it. Many savage Nations were civilized by the *Romans*, and acquainted with the Arts and Virtues of their Conquerors.

THUS the darkest Countries had their Thoughts awakened, and were growing to a Capacity of receiving, at the stated time, the Knowledge of true Religion. So that all things and Circumstances conspired now with the Views of Heaven, and made this apparently *the Fulness of Time*, (Gal. iv. 4.) or the fittest Juncture for God to reveal himself to the *Gentiles*, and to put an End to Idolatry throughout the Earth. Now the

Minds of Men were generally ripe for a purer and brighter Dispensation, and the Circumstances of the World were such, as favored the Success and Progress of it.

IN this very Time the *Messiah* came; nor, for ought I can see, could he have come more opportunely at any other; because the World was at no other preceeding time so well prepared to receive his Doctrines. As to Remission of Sin, and eternal Salvation, it is all one whenever he came. Because the Sacrifice, which he offered for Sin, had its Effects with regard to the Time past, as well as to the Time to come; to the Penitent, that were dead, as well to the living, or those that were yet to be born. (See *Scripture Doctrine of Atonement*, P. 80.) Immortality must belong as much to those who lived virtuously, according to their Degree of Light, before the *Messiah* came, as to those who lived after his coming; and the Blessedness of the future State, though not alike revealed, yet was alike accessible to the one as to the other.

UPON a Review of the whole, it will appear, that the Condition of Mankind was bettered Step by Step, as the Reason and Nature of things directed and would permit. The Scope and Intendment of the whole Scheme of divine Providence, in all its various Dispensations, was to bring human Nature, by proper Degrees, and in a Way

Way consistent with moral Agency, to all the Beauty, Holiness, and Perfection it can, in this present State, attain to. And though we are not indeed able absolutely to trace all the Reasons of the divine Conduct, and to demonstrate the Wisdom of it in every Particular; yet we may, in general, discover, that all the Parts of this Scheme were wisely formed, and pursued, depending regularly on each other, leading to the same great and good End, and adapted to the respective Circumstances and Condition of Mankind.

Note — AFTER the Publication of the Gospel, the *Jewish* Peculiarity was no longer of Use for preserving the Knowledge of God in the World. That End would be much better answered by its Dissolution, and the Dispersion of the *Jews* all over the Earth, as they are even unto this Day. [For the most excellent Character of *Jesus Christ*, and the divine Principles, Doctrine, and Spirit of the Gospel, see my Treatise upon the LORD'S-SUPPER.] *

* WITH this Chapter ends Dr. TAYLOR'S SCHEME of SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY, from the Copy he printed at *Warrington*, for the Use of the Students, in the Academy there; and since corrected, with the Hebrew and Greek Words inserted, by himself.

THE following Chapters the EDITOR hath annexed, and are printed from Dr. TAYLOR'S Manuscript; and would have appeared to greater Advantage, had they had his correcting Hand.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

Mankind, having abused their Natural Powers, stand in Need of an Extraordinary REVELATION.

THE Scriptures are the Word of God; they are the Language and Address of the universal Father to his Children in this World, whom he hath endowed with rational Faculties to hear and understand his Voice. The Scriptures are given *by Inspiration of God, and are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. The Glory of God indeed is to be seen in all the Works of his Hands; and the Speech of his almighty Power, Wisdom, and Goodness is to be heard in the Appearances of Creation which are daily before our Eyes. *Psal. xix. 1, &c.* Mankind in a faithful Use of their natural Powers, might, without any other Guide, know God. *Rom. i. 19. For that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them (for the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, so) that even the Heathen, who have no other Rule but the Light of Nature, they might be without Excuse,*
if

if they are totally ignorant of God. But how much Mankind in all Ages have abused and misapplied their Understandings is notoriously evident, and therefore it must be evident how much they stand in need of an extraordinary Revelation to correct their Errors, to reduce them to the Obedience of God, and to secure them from relapsing into Idolatry and Apostacy from him.

I THINK, no Book can contain more evident Marks of such a Revelation, than the Scriptures, eminently so called, which we are happily possessed of. There we have the fullest and clearest Account of the Nature and Perfections of God, beyond what the World at best could have attained to, and far beyond what could, in the ordinary Course of things, have been preserved through succeeding Generations. The Knowledge of God not being a mere speculative Truth, but having near Connexion with our Morals, would consequently, as the Morals of Men are very liable to be corrupted, have also proportionably been obscured, till it had in a Manner quite vanished away; which we know hath in Fact been true. In the Scriptures, as in a durable Storehouse, not to be demolished by Time, or uncertain Tradition, we have the most noble Discoveries of the Nature and Perfections of God, as he is our Maker, our Father, Owner, Ruler, and daily Benefactor; as he is glorious in all his Attributes; as he is infinite, and independent, eternal,

eternal, and unchangeable, in his Being, Knowledge, Wisdom and Power; as perfectly holy, good, righteous, and true. And these Glories of the divine Nature are described, not in the Way of philosophical Dissertations, not by a Series of abstract Reasoning, which how amusing or instructing soever to Minds of a more refined Turn and Taste, are but of little Service to the Bulk of Mankind, who have but little Leisure, and perhaps less Inclination to attend to the curious and abstruser Deductions of Reason; not thus are the Glories of the divine Nature delineated in Scripture, but exhibited in a long and easily intelligible Series of Facts and Events, wherein God hath manifested his Goodness, Wisdom, Power, and Justice, from the Beginning of the World. In which way the Mind, with very little Labor of Thought, is at once convinced of the Being and Perfections of God, and struck with Admiration, Reverence, Love, and every right Affection which the Knowledge of God should produce in us.

IN the Scriptures any one, in common Life, may not only very readily see that God is, and that he is all that the most learned, the most exact, the most subtle, the most sublime Philosophy, all that the utmost Application and Study of the wisest of Men can discover; but he seeth this at the same time in a practical Light; he seeth that God is
all

all this to *us*; that as great as he is in himself, he is our God and Father, that he hath, from his own Immenfity of Being, given us Being, a noble and distinguished Kind of Being; that he constantly regards us, loveth us, interests himself in our Affairs, is concerned for our Welfare, is daily near us, the Object of our Trust and Dependance; that all our Safety is in his Favour, and that in his Favour, and under his Protection, we are infinitely safe and happy. That we are accountable to him for our Actions, that we are continually under his Eye, and can flee no whither from his Spirit and Presence; that we ought always to set him before us, to act as in his Sight, and to approve ourselves to his all-searching Eye; that he hath taken us into the nearest Relations to himself, that his Design is to make us good, in Order to make us for ever happy; that for this Purpose, he hath been carrying on various Dispensations from the Beginning of the **W**orld to invite and draw Men unto himself.

AT length, in the Fulness of Time, in that Time which to his infinite Wisdom seemed most expedient, he sent a divine Messenger, the Word, his only begotten Son, from his own Bosom, to redeem Men from Iniquity, to reconcile them to God; and in the Way, divine Wisdom judged most proper, to establish upon the most firm and beautiful

ful Foundation, the eternal Salvation of all pious and virtuous Men that have ever been, or shall hereafter be in the World. The eternal God in Christ will be their everlasting Strength, and Joy, and Glory. Thus, I would observe, we not only, in the easiest and clearest Way, learn God and his Perfections from Scripture, but we learn them in a Manner the most proper and powerful to engage and unite our Hearts to God; to warm and quicken our Spirits, to excite us to the Love and Obedience of God, and to consider ourselves infinitely interested in his Attributes and Perfections. Which is to learn divine things; i. e. the most excellent things in a Method vastly superior to all the Reasonings and Instructions of the best and wisest of Philosophers.

In the Scriptures, any Man of common Sense may not only with Ease learn his Duty in the fullest Extent, but at the same time by the numerous Examples of pious Men in all Ages, he may see that it is practicable, and may see how to engage in it; how exact, how constant, how ready and chearful he should be in the discharge of it; how he ought to resist Temptations, to struggle with Difficulties. Even a mean Capacity by reading the Scriptures, shall at the same time discern the Reasonableness, and the Beauty of Holiness, and also be furnished with the strongest Arguments and Motives to embrace it,

it, and to persevere therein, shall be assured of the divine Assistance and Protection in a religious Course, shall find the most proper Consolations and Encouragements in every the most distressed State of Affairs; to every Precept he shall find an adjoined Promise, and his Duty will shine brightly before his Eyes, in the Light and Hope of everlasting Glory.

THERE we have the truest and most effectual Rules for forming our Minds into all Habits of Virtue; not simple Propositions, declaring what we ought to do and be, but Rules of Life intermixed with the Power and Splendor of divine Grace, working mightily to renew us into the divine Nature. There Religion appears in all its Truth, Lustre, Sweetness, and Majesty. There it is dressed in all its Charms; not as a sour, severe, morose, gloomy Principle, forbidding Enjoyment, and the Parent only of Sorrow, Horror, and Despair, but as our Life, our Glory, our Peace, our Joy; as giving us the truest Relish and Enjoyment of Life, as the Source of the most solid Pleasure and Comfort, as uniting us to God, as lodging us for ever in the almighty Arms of his Love and Goodness, as leading to, and preparing for endless Joys and Pleasures in his Presence.

As to Sin and Wickedness, the Philosophers have said much concerning the odious Nature of Vice, that it is Evil, and the worst of Evils, that it is the Disease and
Deformity

Deformity of the Mind, hurtful to the Health of the Body, and ruinous to the Reputation and Estate. Their Reflections were so far just, but the Benefit of them was confined to Men of Letters and Study; the Vulgar received little or no Advantage from them; but in the Scriptures, the meanest Minds are favoured with far better Instructions than they could give. There Sin is not only set forth in all its odious Colours, and in all its pernicious Effects, as to this present Life, but its deadly Nature is demonstrated as it stands in Contrariety to God, as it is the Transgression of his holy Law, as it exposeth us to his Displeasure, and disqualifieth us for his Blessing; as it is opposite to all the Ends of our Creation, and consequently as deserving of Death. That God will punish all the impenitent Workers of Iniquity with everlasting Destruction, and purge out of his Kingdom every thing that offends, that is either mischievous or polluting. And all this is so plainly and powerfully inculcated upon the Mind, by many dreadful Examples of the divine Vengeance upon ungodly Men, throughout the whole Series of Scripture-History, by so many express Declarations of God's Wrath, and so many Exhortations of his Goodness and Mercy, to turn from every evil Way, that no one, who carefully and seriously reads the Scriptures, can miss not only of seeing the Evil,

Evil, the Irregularity and Deformity of Sin, but of having his Mind affected with it, and wrought into the most rational and the most settled Detestation of it.

WITH REGARD to the Pardon of Sin, the wisest of Philosophers seem to have very imperfect Notions of it. They rarely and very superficially considered it in its Relation of Dissonancy to the divine Perfections; and therefore say little or nothing concerning the Placableness of the Deity, whether God would pardon Sin, or in what Way his Wisdom thought proper to do it. Sacrifices were frequent among them, but they seem to have understood nothing of their true Nature and End, nor were at all solicitous to enquire into them. In truth, they did not understand the true Demerit of Sin, and therefore of course, must be in the dark, as to the Remission of it. But all these things are open and obvious to the weakest Capacity in Scripture.

How much the World was in the dark about a future State without a Revelation is well known, and how clearly now the World to come is opened to us in the awful Prospects of eternal Happiness, or endless Perdition, can be concealed from none who are ever so little acquainted with the Gospel of Christ. — These things duely attended to, will shew us the admirable Excellency of the holy Scriptures; that God's Word is Truth,

and able to make us wise unto Salvation ; and further do demonstrate, that it is our Duty to be much in reading them.

READING the Scriptures is one of the first Principles of our Religion, as we are Christians, because our Profession is built wholly upon the Scriptures. We justly own no other Rule of our Faith but the Word of God. *Eph. ii. 20. We are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone.* And we are built upon no other Foundation. If we are true Christians, however we may use or value the Writings of Men, we make not them, not the best of them, the Rule of our Faith, but the Word of God alone. But that Rule ought to be thoroughly perused, and digested, otherwise how good soever in itself, or how much soever we profess to take it for our Rule, it is in Fact, no Rule to us. The Word of God is the Guide of our Actions ; *it is a Lamp unto our Feet, and a Light unto our Path. Psal. cxix. 105.* Should we not then diligently study the Word of God, that we may not wander from his Commandments ? The Word of God is the Spring of all our Comfort and Hopes.

THERE and there alone, we have the rich and immense Treasure of the divine Promises ; and from thence alone, we can draw solid Support and Consolation, in any dark Hour of Trial and Affliction. In short, to all the valuable Purposes of Knowledge and Life,

Life, the Scriptures do infinitely excel all human Compositions whatsoever. They are but as the twinkling Stars to that Ocean of Light which is poured out daily from the Body of the Sun. Of all the Means of Knowledge and Wisdom in the World, I know nothing to be compared with the Word of God. The Reason of the thing therefore requires we should have our Eyes intent upon this Light and Illumination. For this End God hath given us this invaluable Treasure, the holy Scriptures, that we should make them our Study.

It must be observed carefully, that it is not enough to be much in reading the Scriptures, but while we read we should employ all our Attention to understand them. The Scriptures may be understood, but evidently not in every Degree by every Man; for as there are various Sorts and Degrees of Knowledge in Scripture, some perhaps, at present, beyond the Reach of any Man that ever yet was in the World; and as there are in Men various Capacities, and Degrees of Learning, so it is manifest, all Men cannot attain to the same Degree of Understanding in divine things; but there must necessarily be a great Difference between the Knowledge of one Man and another in Matters of Faith and Revelation. This shews the Absurdity of the Popish Scheme, which pretends to reduce the christian Faith in all its Parts to a certain invariable Standard, to which every Man either explicitly or implicitly,

either with or without Understanding, must conform.

THIS shews how much soever it is our Duty to communicate Knowledge one to another, that it is quite contrary to true Religion to quarrel with one another, or to be displeased because we have not all the same Degree of Understanding in Matters of Faith and Religion ; because this, according to the present Constitution of our Minds, and of the Revelation God hath given us, which he never intended should be equally understood by all, is quite impracticable. But although the Scriptures are not to be understood in every Degree by every Man, yet they may be understood by every Man so far as God requireth, i. e. so far as he is capable of understanding them ; for what a Man can understand, he may understand, if he is not wanting to himself.

AND as God can require of no Man beyond his Abilities, so no more than what a Man can understand of Scripture is to him a Rule of Faith and Practice ; for what he cannot understand, he cannot be bound to believe or do. Further, those things in Scripture which are of the highest Importance, and most conducive to a holy Life, are generally very easy to be understood ; and therefore how perplexed soever those other things may be about which Men have differed, though not so perplexed in Revelation, as they are in Mens Heads and Writings ;

tings ; yet I say, how perplexed and difficult soever they may be, the grand Principles of Faith and Practice are so evident, that any ordinary Capacity, may, with due Care and Attention, easily gain the most comfortable Knowledge of them. Thus the Scriptures may be understood.

So far as they are not understood, they are, at least, useless to us. Nay further, the Scriptures misunderstood, may prove very hurtful to us. The things chiefly to be understood in Scripture are *Principles*, or the Grounds and Reasons of things, and *Precepts* which are the Rules of Duty ; now if we mistake either, we shall throw all into Confusion, our Way will be all Mist and Clouds, that which should be Light will be Darkness, or, which is all one, a false Light to mislead us ; that which should be our Joy, will be our Heaviness ; that which should be our Comfort, and inspire chearful Hope, will be a dead Weight to burthen our Spirits and clog our Course. Our Path which should be as the shining Light, that shineth more and more, will be a gloomy melancholy Road, and we shall make our Way with Difficulty, because we want that true Sense and Knowledge of the Ways and Will of God, which is necessary to give Life, Comfort, and Vigour. Chimeras and frightful Images will terrify our Consciences, and fill us with groundless Fears ; God will be painted in monstrous Colours, and all the

ravishing Glories of his Truth, Wisdom, and Love, which should powerfully draw our Hearts to him, will be hid from our Eyes. The Lustre of redeeming Grace will in part, or wholly, be eclipsed. Some parts of Religion will be superstitiously magnified, while others of greater Consequence will be undervalued.

FURTHER, if for want of due Attention to the Sense of Scripture we mistake and fall into Error, we ought to be sensible, that religious Error is of a far worse Nature than any other; not only as it is Error in a Matter of the greatest Importance, but as it is of all others, the most difficult to be corrected. For under the sacred Name of Religion it shelters and defends itself, and gains the Character of Truth, of important, necessary, awful, and perhaps excellent Truth; and the unwary think themselves bound in Conscience and Duty to maintain it with Zeal; and then whoever endeavours to correct it, though ever so much in the Spirit of Meekness and Peace, must do it at his Peril. Hence those grosser Instances of Persecution and Bloodshed which have fouled the christian Name. Hence those Wranglings, Debates, Heats, Animosities, which have destroyed christian Societies. These things are the Fruit of Mens taking their religious Principles upon Trust, and not fetching them from the Scriptures, studied, and understood by themselves. Such Contempt and Neglect

lect of the Word of God exposeth them to strong Delusion, and such Delusion leads them to fight in the Dark for they know not what. Thus Religion is corrupted, the Corruption of it defended, and Irreligion and Infidelity propagated, even by religious People themselves. So the Sceptic, who is indifferent to any Principles, when he finds Absurdity mixed with the christian Faith, taking the whole for a true Account of Christianity, rejects the whole. For even common Sense will not allow that Revelation to be divine, which cannot, in many of its parts, be reconciled with the known Perfections of God.

By this unhappy Means what Numbers in our Land have been drawn into Deism ! And, by this unhappy Means, I guess, if the Truth were known, Religion appears but in a doubtful Light to many who seem to be strict Professors of it ; for where it is not received in its proper Evidence, there cannot be, I think, a full and strong Assent of Faith ; and no Man can receive it in its proper Evidence, who doth not endeavour carefully to understand the Scriptures.

Thus many who talk much of the Word of God, and pretend a great Reverence for it, may possibly at the last Day be ranked among the Despisers of it ; because, although they have, perhaps, been much in reading of it, they never set themselves in good earnest

to understand it, and so in Effect might as well not have read it at all ; for their Reading of it is only from a superstitious Opinion, as *Turks*, and *Jews*, and *Papists* turn over the Books in Reputation among them, not from the Love of Truth, not with a Desire to understand the Truth ; that most People suppose they understand before they read their Bibles or however without reading their Bibles ; not to open their Eyes, and to give them a more just and distinct View of the Ways and Dispensations of God, such things they learn from other Books ; not to confirm and establish their Minds in the Faith of God and of Christ ; not for those Purposes, I fear, are the Scriptures read, but only in a customary, superstitious, or however, in a very careless, superficial Way ; and therefore there are so few Christians that grow in Grace, that rise in spiritual Strength, Peace, Love, and Joy, because there are so few that grow in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2 *Pet.* iii. 18.

THE full Knowledge of Christ most People presume they have attained long ago, and to talk of knowing more of Christ, or in a clearer and more rational Way, is perfectly shocking to them. They have somewhere or other fixed the precise Standard of divine Knowledge, and either more or less than that Standard of theirs is impious and

and heretical. How then can they grow in the Knowledge of Christ? How can they set themselves to understand the Scriptures, who in another way, as they think, have already gained the whole Sum and Body of spiritual Understanding? See *Rom. xv. 4.* *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our Learning, for our Instruction, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope.* We have hope through that Patience and Comfort which is taught in the Scriptures; but the Grounds and Reasons of that Patience and Comfort must be understood, otherwise we cannot establish in our Minds a sure and solid Hope. Hence it is that the christian Hope, that Faith, and Hope which overcometh the World, is so great a Rarity; therefore so few rejoice in Hope, because so few understand the Scriptures, which are the Ground of the christian Hope. Lastly, because the Scriptures are but little understood, therefore they are so little valued. We delight not in them, because we know so little of them.

LET it be remembered, that we shall have the *Benefit* of the Scriptures by studiously endeavouring to understand them. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. So far as we understand the Word of Truth, we shall be truly enlightened, our Consciences will be rightly directed, and all our Principles well established;

tablished ; we shall see its real Excellency, and it will accordingly be valued and esteemed ; we shall taste its Comforts, feel its Power, be convinced of its divine Original, and it will be pleasant and precious to us. The more we understand of the Scriptures, the more we shall with Pleasure see the Righteousness, Wisdom, and Goodness of all the divine Dispensations, that all of them are adjusted and settled by the Love of a Father, and calculated to promote our Happiness. This will draw our Hearts to God, and shew us the infinite Reasonableness of comporting with the Constitutions of his Grace.

IF we are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, our Faith will stand upon a sure Bottom, and not upon the weak, precarious Judgment of Man ; henceforth we shall be no more Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine. *Ephes. iv. 14.* But shall by Use have our Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil. Thus we shall with our own Eyes see the Truth, and be instrumental in preserving the Purity of our Religion. Thus we shall grow up into Christ in all things, in Knowledge, in Faith, and Love. Thus we shall be rooted and grounded in Love, in the Love of God, of Truth, and of our Neighbour. The Knowledge we gain, whether it be more or less, being
drawn

drawn from the true Fountain, will compose our Spirits, and incline us neither to despise the Weakness of those that know less, nor to reject the Instructions of those that may know more than ourselves.

THESE weighty Considerations should engage us to read the Scriptures with all possible Care and Diligence ; to study them with an upright Desire to gain their true Sense and Meaning. We all know how much Men are at Variance about the Sense of Scripture, one affirming that this, another that that is the true Sense. So it may well be expected to be in our present Weakness ; and so God hath permitted it to be ; not to give us Occasion to censure, judge, and disparage one another, as is too common, for this is expressly forbidden ; but this Variety of Sentiments is permitted to teach us to cease from Man, and should convince us that we ought not to resign our Understandings or Consciences to any Man's Judgment whatsoever.



C H A P. XXXIX.

The History of REVELATION, and some OBJECTIONS to it answered.

I SHALL consider first,
THE Authority and Original of holy Scripture ; and then,

THE Use and Importance of it ; it is *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. and so is profitable for the noblest Purposes, the enlightening of our Minds, the purifying of our Hearts, the regulating of our Practice, and the saving of our Souls.

As to the Authority and Original of holy Scripture, it is said, by a very good and sufficient Judge, that it is *given by Inspiration of God*. How we are to understand being *given by Inspiration of God*, the Apostle PETER will inform us, 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. *Knowing this, saith he, that no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private Interpretation, Sense, or Impulse ; meaning, that no Prophecy did issue or proceed from the private Sense or Thoughts of the Writer ; it was not giving a Loose to his own Conceits and Imaginations. For, as it follows, the Prophecy came*
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not in old time by the Will of Man ; but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost ; or by the holy Spirit of God, enlightening their Minds and directing them what to say. Thus the Scriptures are inspired ; they are the Word of God, and what is contained in them, we are to understand and reverence as spoken by God himself. But then, in the strictest Sense, this is to be understood only of what Prophets, as Prophets, have delivered to us ; such as Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest. No Prophecy of Scripture did proceed from the private Sense of the Writer, but was dictated by the Spirit of God. But as for the historical Writings, though, doubtless, they owe their Original to the special Providence of God, yet it is sufficient to suppose, that they were wrote by Men of Probity, fully acquainted with the Facts which they relate.

THIS premised, I should now advance a few Arguments to establish the Authority and Excellency of the Scriptures, that they were indeed given by Inspiration of God, or that in them holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit. But to prepare the Way it is necessary I should give a general Account and History of Revelation ; then remove some Objections which are leveled against it, as if it were needless,

too partial, or too ineffectual, to be consistent with the divine Goodness ; or as if we were not sufficiently secure, that we now have in Possession those very Books entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded.

REVELATION is that which makes known to us the Will and Ways of the most high God, the Father of the Universe, the Fountain of all Being and Happiness, upon whom we have a necessary Dependence for Life, for Understanding, and Knowledge, for well-being, and Enjoyment, at all times and in every respect ; for without him we cannot live, we cannot breathe, we can have no kind or Degree of Sense and Understanding. This is true. And it is equally true, that the best, and most beneficent of Beings, the greatest, and the kindest of all Fathers, could have no other End or Design in creating Mankind, but his own Glory, and their Happiness. The chief End of Man must be to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever ; for perfect Goodness cannot be conceived to propose any lower End in making a Creature so noble and excellent. But then it is certain, both from the Holiness of God, and the Nature of an intelligent, rational Being, that a Character of Holiness and Virtue, of Obedience, Righteousness, or right Conduct, is necessary, on our part, to our Enjoyment
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of God, or our Happiness in his Favor and Blessing. It is necessary that we love the great Author of our Being, that we pay him all due Honor and Obedience, that we are dutifully submissive to his Will, that we understand our Dependence upon him, and what we have to expect from him, that we may be excited to Gratitude, and a due Improvement of his Benefits.

WE cannot love, honor, and obey God, unless we know him, and are acquainted with him ; nor can we possibly have any Knowledge, or Understanding of any kind whatever, but what must come originally from God. Therefore, that God, our Father, should instruct and teach his Creatures, whom he has made for the highest and noblest Ends, in those things which immediately relate to his Glory and their Happiness, is perfectly consonant to his Goodness and Love. And that infinite Wisdom, the Lord and Proprietor of all Being, should have various Ways of making known himself and his Will to us, is also perfectly true. He hath produced a great Variety of Creatures with different Powers and Instincts in our World, by them to show that he can bestow upon us any Kind or Degree of Being ; he hath displayed his immense Greatness, Power, Wisdom, and Goodness in the numberless glorious Bodies which, by his Hand,

Hand, are perpetually rolled about us in the Heavens. His continually providing for our Subsistence, in a way which is quite out of our Power, plainly demonstrates our absolute Dependence upon him, and Obligations to him. This is the Book of Nature spread before all Nations, and legible to every Understanding; in which every attentive Mind may read the Perfections of God, and the main Duties which we owe him. But, to him who made our Senses and Minds, and is always intimate to them, there must be many other possible Ways of making known his Will to us; as by an audible Voice, a Vision, or secret Impressions upon our Spirits. Therefore to believe, that God at sundry times, and divers Manners, spake to the ancient Fathers by the Prophets, is believing a thing very possible, reasonable, and fitting.

AND it is no improbable Supposition, that in the earliest Ages of the World, God should only communicate his Will to pious Men, and leave them to hand it down to others by Tradition. For in those Days the Longevity of Mankind favored this Manner of Conveyance. With our Grand-Parent *Adam*, *Methuselah* lived 243 Years; with *Methuselah*, *Shem* the Son of *Noah* lived about 97 Years; and with *Shem*, *Jacob* the Son of *Isaac*, the Son of *Abraham*, lived 50 Years,

Years, as appears from the History of *Genesis*. So that no more than three Persons, *Methuselah*, *Shem*, and *Jacob*, were sufficient to hand down the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, from *Adam* to the time when the Children of *Israel* went down into *Egypt*, that is, through the Space of 2238 Years. But when the Life of Man was reduced to the narrow Period of four-score Years, and the World on all Sides was fallen into various sorts of Corruption, and Idolatry and Ignorance of God generally prevailed among the Nations, Tradition evidently ceased to be a safe Mean of Conveyance.

It was then the divine Wisdom judged it a proper time to erect a peculiar Kingdom, Church, or Congregation in the World; and for its Illumination gave the Knowledge of his Will and Worship in Writing, by the Hand of his Servant *Moses*; that by such Writing, or Scripture, divine Truth might more easily be preserved, be further spread, and, when lost, more easily restored. This must be acknowledged a wise and proper Expedient. After the time of *Moses*, God was pleased to give Revelations to the subsequent Prophets, as Occasion required; till in the Fulness of Time, the great Prophet, the Son of God, came into the World, opened a new Dispensation, and all the Treasures of the divine Grace, which had not before been

so clearly made known to the Church and People of God. And what he and his Apostles taught is also committed to Writing, and compleats what we call the Canon of Scripture.

THIS is the general Account and History of Revelation which I proposed to give. And we may here observe, that a written Revelation and the Church of God are co-existent ; that is to say, at the same time the Church was brought into the World, the Scriptures were brought into the Church ; and both are so essentially connected, that take away the one, and you take away the other. Take away the Scriptures, and we are reduced to the State of meer Nature ; our Charter is destroyed, and our Polity, as we are God's Church and Kingdom, is overthrown. We may indeed, possibly, pretend, as the Papists do, that we are, though deprived of the Scriptures, still a Church ; yet without the Scriptures, as our Rule and Foundation, we are not the Church of God, but under a different Head, it may be the Pope, or some other usurped Authority. But this by the Bye.

I shall now remove some Objections which may be leveled against Revelation in general.

IT is pretended—*To be quite needless, Nature and Reason being sufficient to direct any Man in the plain Way of his Duty, without any supernatural Assistance.* I answer—

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It must be allowed, in general, that Nature and Reason are sufficient to direct any Man in the Way of his Duty, so far as God, in his Circumstances, expects Duty from him. For God expects Duty from every Person only in Proportion to the Light he enjoys, and to the Talents he hath received. But the Experience of all Mankind shews that Nature and Reason, by themselves, will advance but a little Way in the Knowledge of divine things. Gentlemen in a Land like ours, where, in spite of themselves, their Nature and Reason is enlightened and directed in a considerable Degree by Revelation, may talk of the Perfection and Sufficiency of Nature and Reason.

IF we look into those Nations, which are perfect Strangers to Revelation, we shall find them grossly ignorant of the Being, Unity, and Perfections of God, the Dispensations of his Providence, the proper Honor and Worship that is due to him, the Prayers we may address to his Goodness, and the Hopes we may entertain of his Acceptance. They know nothing of the Pardon of Sin, the Promises of God's Mercy and Blessing, nor of any thing belonging to the Covenant of his Love, the present Privileges, or future Glory of his Kingdom. The Resurrection from the dead, the Day of Judgment, the immortal Life, which will be the Reward of Piety and Virtue, and the Death ever-

lasting, which will be the sad Lot of all the impenitently wicked, they are altogether, or in a great Measure, unacquainted with. But all these are great Principles in Religion, and of great Force to purify our Spirits, ennoble our Minds, animate our Hopes, and guard us against the Influence of bodily Appetites, and the Violence of Temptation.

AND however others may fare, in a great Degree of Darkness and Ignorance, through the favorable Allowance of God, yet surely every Man's Reason will tell him, that superior Knowledge, and a more extensive View of the divine Dispensations, is absolutely necessary to a higher Degree of Goodness, Comfort, Obedience, and Devotedness to God. What the Poets relate may be true, that some primitive Mortals subsisted only upon Acorns and Water, in Dens and Caves; and we know there are some Parts of the World where the naked Inhabitants enjoy very few Conveniencies of Life; but shall we therefore despise the Blessings of Agriculture, and the various Accommodations which make Life happy and comfortable, and say they are needless? Would any Man in *England* ever think of turning out naked into the Fields and Woods, because it is possible, and may somewhere in Fact be true, that Men may live upon wild Fruit and Water, without Cloths, or any Habitation, but the Dens and Caves of the Earth? Corn and
other

other agreeable Food, Cloths, and commodious Habitations, fitted up with proper Furniture and Utensils, are necessary to our Kind and Degree of Life in the natural World ; and so is Revelation to a corresponding Kind and Degree of spiritual Life. The Food, Raiment, and Habitations we enjoy are the Gift of God's Goodness, and it is our Duty to accept and use them with Thankfulness. In like Manner, Revelation is the Gift of God, and, as such, it ought to be received ; and as it gives greater Light, we are obliged to attend accordingly to it, because we must, in the Nature of things, be accountable for it.

I may add upon this Head, that however Nature and Reason, in their pure and most perfect State, may be sufficient to direct in the Way of Duty, yet when Nature is corrupted, and Reason obscured, or almost quite extinguished, they are by no Means sufficient to restore and recover themselves to the Knowledge and Obedience of the Truth ; because they themselves, who should be the Physician to heal themselves, are sick and disabled. But it was the primary Intention of Revelation to restore and preserve the Knowledge of God and of his Will in a corrupt and degenerate World.

So far therefore I see no Objection against Revelation, but it may be both very needful, and a very great Blessing to Mankind.

It may be said—*If this Blessing was given to all Mankind, who all equally stand in need of it ; but whereas it is confined only to a Part of Mankind, while others are left to grope in the Dark, how can it be accounted the Gift of divine Goodness ? For is not God equally the God, Father, and Saviour of all Men ? How then can it be consistent with his Beneficence to confine the Light of Revelation to some, which would so much contribute to the Happiness of all ? May we not then conclude, that a partial Revelation is no Revelation from God, nor worthy of our Regard ?*

I answer—It is very certain that God is the Saviour of all Men, that he is good to all, and that his tender Mercies are over all his Works. But while we are sure of this, we are not equally sure that our Reason is a perfect Rule for adjusting the Distribution of his Benefits. On the other Hand, we may be very sure that it is not. From the lowest to the highest Degree of Existence, from a Grain of Sand, to the most glorious Angel in Heaven, every higher Degree of Being is an incontestible Proof, that God may very justly, according to his own Wisdom and good Pleasure, bestow what Gifts, Endowments, Privileges, and Advantages upon his Creatures he sees fit. He is Debtor to none. Our Understanding is no Measure of his Wisdom, neither are his Dispensations to be censured by our narrow and imperfect Judgments.

ments. And methinks, we may as well make it an Objection against the Goodness of divine Providence, that all Men are not rich alike, wise alike, or knowing and learned alike.

WOULD you not think him a very foolish Man, who should be displeased that God has made him rich, and placed him in easy Circumstances, because there are many about him in a poor low Condition? Who refuses Wealth, or Objects against Plenty, because his Neighbours are pinched, and make but a hard Shift to get a Living? Or who can be so absurd, as to reckon his superior Knowledge and Learning to be no valuable Advantage, because there are Numbers of illiterate Persons, who are much below him in Understanding? Or that the Possession of Reason is no Blessing, because there are so many Idiots to be found among Mankind? Or can you suppose there are any of the angelic Body, or of those Spirits who excel us in all Endowments and Happiness, who despise their own Blessings and heavenly Felicity, as no Gifts of the divine Bounty, because we in this Earth, are not set upon a Level with them? And is it not as foolish and absurd to deny Revelation, or to argue against it, as improperly bestowed, and unworthy of the divine Goodness, because indeed it is not communicated to all the World, as well as to ourselves? It is very unnatural

to dispute against God's Goodness in any Shape, and very presumptuous to direct him how to bestow it either as to Quantity, Quality, or Extent. If it is Fact, that he has given us any Blessing, our Duty surely is to be thankful, and to enjoy and improve it, whether he has bestowed more or less upon our Fellow-Creatures; being certain where less is given, less will be required; and that the Judge of the whole Earth, will, in the last Day, deal with all in perfect Equity and Goodness. But,

IF Revelation is such a Blessing, surely it would appear in the Fruits or Effects of it. Whereas great Numbers, if not the generality of those who enjoy Revelation, are as bad as the very Heathen, who are Strangers to it. And such Evils have been produced, such Variance, Discord, and bloody Persecutions, on Account of revealed Religion, that it may justly be questioned, whether it has not done more Harm than Good. What Reason then have we to say, it is a valuable Gift, or worthy of the Father of the Universe?

To this I reply—That natural Causes by a Sort of Necessity produce their proper Effects; so Fire always burns combustible Matter, and a good Medicine heals a Disease; and that is no Fire which will not burn proper Matter, nor that a good Medicine, which never heals a Disease. But moral Causes are of a different Nature, because
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their Efficacy depends upon the Choice and Disposition of the Subjects to whom they are applied. And therefore a moral Means, or Cause, may be in itself most excellent, though it happens to produce no good Effect ; nay, though accidentally it may prove the Occasion of very bad Effects. Our Lord's Ministry and Doctrine was perfectly divine, and yet it had but small Influence for good upon the *Jewish* Nation ; nay, on the other Hand, excited their Malice to that Degree, that they slew the Prince of Life.

WHATEVER Effects therefore, Revelation may have produced in the World, still it is true, that it is a valuable Gift, and worthy of the divine Goodness. But it must ever be remembered, that it is absolutely necessary to our receiving any Benefit from Gospel-Means, that we be truly desirous to shake off the Yoke of Sin, and to cultivate and improve our Minds in Virtue and true Holiness. If therefore we expect there is any Life or Power provided in the Gospel, which will anticipate our own Thoughts and Concerns ; or that will begin to work upon our Minds, and excite them to Thoughtfulness and Care, whilst we ourselves are thoughtless and unconcerned, we shall but deceive ourselves. For sure I am, there is nothing in the Gospel that encourages such an Expectation ; on the contrary, such an Expectation is utterly inconsistent with the grand
Design

Design of revealing the Grace and Mercy of God; which is to awaken our Consciences, and to excite us to Care and Diligence in our spiritual Concerns.

THE Notion I have just now mentioned, manifestly tends to lull us asleep in Security and Indolence; and encourages to go on in the Contempt of God and our own Salvation; or in any of the Paths of Folly and Sin, upon a Presumption, that we can never turn out, till we are constrained by some uncertain, unaccountable Act of almighty Power. True indeed, our own Thoughts, Desires, and Endeavours, will effect but little, without the Help of divine Power; but yet, if we choose to live in Ignorance, Unbelief, or any Branch of Impiety and Wickedness; if our Hearts are so attached to the World, so ingrossed by Business, sensual Pleasures and Amusements, that we can spare no serious Reflections for God, our Souls, and a future World, I cannot see how we should be saved by any Grace, which the Gospel has provided in Jesus Christ.

IT is certain, the Gospel hath produced many good Effects, and will always do so, where it is received and attended to. For as for those pretended Christians who make it the Occasion of Variance, Hatred, and Persecution, we cannot, with any Justice or Propriety, say, that they do receive or attend to Revelation; nay, it is very certain, that

that in Fact, they do not. Nor must we allow, that in Popish Countries, where Corruption of Manners greatly prevails, and Superstition, Idolatry, and Persecution are established, they enjoy the Benefit of Revelation, when we know, that for many Ages, the Use of the Scriptures hath been forbidden, and a Religion taught and professed, which is quite foreign to the Word of God.

BUT how can we be sure, that we have now in Possession, those very Books entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded? May they not in length of Time be lost, or quite altered from what they were at first? Or so varied and changed by Transcribers and Translators, that we can never be sure that we have the true and genuine Sense of Scripture?

I ANSWER—No Nation in the World, can be more sure of any of their publick Acts and Records, preserved in their Archives with the utmost Care, than we are of the Truth of the Scriptures now in our Hands. The *Jews* preserved the Books of *Moses*, as the Laws of their Kingdom, in the most sacred Part of the Tabernacle and Temple; those Books, the Psalms and Prophets, were every where publicly read in their Synagogues, every Week on the Sabbath-Day; their learned Men, with the utmost Exactness and Scrupulosity, inspected
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and guarded the Text, even so far as to count the very Number of Letters in every Book. In short, our Lord, and the Apostles, frequently quote *Moses*, the *Psalms* and *Prophets*, without any Intimation, that those Books were in any Respect altered or depraved. Whereas had they indeed been corrupted, we need not doubt but our blessed Saviour would have reformed that as well as, or rather, more than any other Instance of Corruption among the *Jews*.

FROM our Lord's Time, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were publickly read by the Jews in all Parts of the World; and those Scriptures, and the apostolic Writings, as they came out, were read by Christians every where in their Assemblies, and dispersed over all the World, where the Religion of Jesus was professed; as containing the Laws and Rules of the Religion he taught. Insomuch that it was impossible to corrupt or deprave them. And for that Reason, even the Church of ROME, or those who erected that antichristian Power, never durst attempt to make the least Alteration in the Scriptures, as knowing it would be to no Purpose; but instead of that, they claimed the sole Right of interpreting the Scriptures, which served their Ends full as well as corrupting them. For he who hath Power to put what Sense he pleases upon a Law, may

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as effectually make it void, as he who destroys it.

AND as for Transcribers, or Translators, it is for the same Reason impossible they should make any material Alterations. And it is in Fact true, that they have not. For you may take any Translation, in any Language, or by any Party among Christians, Papists as well as Protestants, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the Covenant of the Lord our God, and the several Duties to which we are thereby obliged, though they may differ in some things, and Commentators may put their own Sense upon others. But the main things, I am well satisfied, have been preserved pure and entire in every Translation from the Beginning to this Day.

THUS the Objections against Revelation in general, which are all that I ever heard of, are removed, I hope to Satisfaction. Upon the whole, they seem to me to proceed not from a sober Mind, sincerely desirous of the best Knowledge and Instruction; for how can one allow him to be a true Scholar, or sincerely desirous of improving in useful Learning, who meeting with a Book excellently adapted to that Purpose, refuses to make Use of it, because he is already possessed of the Faculty of Reason, or because it is not in the Hands of every Body; or because some have made a bad Use of it;

or

or because he doubts whether it may not have undergone some Alterations; when the Book, in itself considered, is an excellent Performance, and capable of giving him the most profitable Instruction?

THE Bible, as we now have it in our Hands, thanks be to God, is by far the most excellent Book in our Language; and as we have it in our Translation, is in itself, setting aside all Circumstances, a pure and plentiful Fountain of divine Knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full Account of the divine Dispensations, and particularly of the Gospel of our Salvation. So that whoever studies the Bible, the English Bible, is sure of gaining the Knowledge and Faith, which if duely applied to the Heart and Conversation, will infallibly guide him to eternal Life. For which Reason it is our Wisdom and Duty, to be much in reading and meditating upon the Bible, that our Minds being well furnished with heavenly Wisdom, and our Hearts tinctured with a divine Spirit, we may be prepared for Glory, Honour, and Immortality.

C H A P. XL.

That the Scriptures are given by INSPIRATION of God, appears from the exprefs and frequent Assertions of Moses, the Prophets and Apostles.

I HAVE already given a general Account and History of Revelation; and have shewn that it is perfectly consonant to the Goodness and Love of God, to the Relation in which we stand in to him, and the high and glorious Purposes for which he has given us our Being; and that he committed Revelation to Writing at a very proper Time, when the Shortness of human Life, and the general Corruption of the World, rendered Tradition no longer a safe Mean of Conveyance; and when the Kingdom or peculiar Congregation, he had erected, required a standing Light for the Preservation of divine Truth.

I HAVE likewise endeavoured to remove some Objections against Revelation in general.

ON this head I would beg leave to repeat, that never were any Books more publickly and commonly known, being read and heard with the greatest Reverence once every Week, in both *Jewish* and *Christian* Assemblies;

blies ; for a very long Tract of Time, the Old Testament before the Coming of our Lord, and the Old and New after his Coming, to this very Day. So that it is, in the Nature of things, impossible that the holy Scriptures should be adulterated ; nor could any Man, who had a Mind to alter or corrupt them, promise himself Success in an Attempt, which must immediately be detected, and confounded, by Thousands of Copies every where dispersed, and constantly read before numerous Assemblies, in the various Languages of even more Nations, than ever composed the Roman Empire in its largest Extent.

TRANSCRIBERS may indeed make literal Mistakes, but those are easily corrected by a Variety of Manuscripts ; and Translators may differ in giving the literal Sense of some Words and Phrases, but not so as to render the main Subjects and Substance of the Scriptures either obscure or uncertain. For you may take any Translations in any Language, or done by any Party among Christians, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the Covenant of the Lord our God, the State of things in a future World, and the several Duties to which we are obliged, though they may not render the Letter of the Text in the same Words, nor with the same Propriety of Expression. The more perfect, and exact in all things, any

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Translation is, the better it is ; but I am very sure, that all things pertaining to the Dispensations of God, his Grace and Promises, and our Hopes and Duty, have been preserved pure and entire in every Translation, from the Beginning to this Day. And this is abundantly enough for our Instruction, Comfort, Direction, and Edification.

GENTLEMEN in foreign Business, who do not understand foreign Languages, are obliged to carry it on by the Help of Translations. And if a Letter in *Italian*, *German*, *Spanish*, or *French*, was put into the Hands of Twenty Translators, there are great Odds, but every Translation would differ, more or less, in some Expressions. The same Words or Phrases would hardly be rendered in the same Manner by every one of the Translators ; and yet they might all agree with Respect to the Sense of the Merchant. And that being all his Correspondent wants to understand, he will never think it worth his while to enter into minute Particulars, or a critical Propriety of Phrases, which have nothing to do with his Business. Just so it is with Reference to the Translation of the Bible. In above the Space of an Hundred Years, Learning may have received considerable Improvements, and by that Means, some Inaccuracies may be found in a Translation, more than a Hundred Years old. But you may rest fully satisfied, that as our En-

glish Translation is, in itself, by far the most excellent Book in our Language, so it is a pure and plentiful Fountain of divine Knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full Account of the divine Dispensations, and particularly of the Gospel of our Salvation ; insomuch, that whoever studies the Bible, the English Bible, is sure of gaining that Knowledge and Faith which, if duly applied to the Heart and Conversation, will infallibly guide him to eternal Life.

[BUT you may say, how then comes it to pass, that learned Men differ so much about the Sense of Scripture ? I answer. They differ not so much about the literal Sense, or Translation of Scripture, as about the Construction which they put upon the literal Sense. For Example, all are agreed that those Words, *Take, Eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you*, are rightly and well translated ; but the Question is, what is the Meaning of them ? The Papist will tell you, they mean, that the Bread in the Lord's-Supper is really turned into the Body, Soul, and Divinity of Christ ; the Protestant very justly denieth the monstrous and idolatrous Absurdity, and affirms, that the Bread is only a figurative Representation of Christ's sacrificed Body. Translators are generally pretty well agreed, but Divines differ very much about the Sense of Scripture, which may afterwards be considered.]

THUS,

THUS, by demonstrating the Reasonableness and Expediency of Revelation in general, by removing Objections against it, and by showing the Sufficiency of the Translation, which, thanks to God, is in all our Hands, the Way is prepared —

To advance a few Arguments to establish the Authority and Excellency of the Scriptures; that they were indeed given by Inspiration of God, or that, in them, holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit.

WE have sufficient Reason to believe that we have in our Hands the very Books that were written by *Moses*, by the Prophets, and by the Apostles of Christ. Now that those Books were given by Inspiration of God, or that the Persons who wrote them have delivered to us what they received from Heaven, will appear —

FROM their own express and frequent Assertions. *Moses* and the Prophets always declare they spake in the Name of the Lord, and delivered to the People what they received in Commission from him; the Apostles likewise assure us, that they were taught by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, were endued with the Spirit of God, and commissioned by him to preach the Gospel to all Nations. And we have all the Reason in the World to believe they have told us the Truth. For if they have not, they must be

very bad, designing Men, who solemnly and publickly fathered upon God, Constitutions, Laws, Doctrines, and Declarations which they knew very well were false and fictitious, the Creatures of their own Invention, obtruded upon the World to serve some selfish, sinister Purposes. But, for any thing we can see, they appear to be Persons of the highest Character for Honor and Probity. In the whole of their Conduct we find the utmost Integrity and Disinterestedness, and in every Part of their History and Writings the utmost Simplicity and Impartiality.

WE may carry this Argument further, and set it in a still stronger Light in the Case of the *Prophets*. For if, when they declared they spake in the Name of God, and by a Commission from him, they declared a Falshood, they must certainly know that it was a Falshood; and if they knew it was a Falshood, they were not only very wicked, but even void of common Sense. For the Prophets, in a long Series one after another, got nothing by speaking in the Name of the Lord, but Scorn and Contempt from the Generality of their Countreymen. When they entered upon the ungrateful Office, they renounced all worldly Views, and were harassed and persecuted in Proportion to their Fidelity in executing it.

Now, this is too much by far for any pious Fraud to bear, even in the Case of a
single

single Person, much more in a Series of Succession of Men in several Generations. An Impostor, like *Mahomet*, may carry his Pretences very high, but he can never bear the Furnace of Persecution. That terrible Scourge will either silence his false and arrogant Claims, or force him to take up Arms, if it is in his Power, for his own Vindication and Security. But the Prophets were naked Men, who, without the least Dependence upon worldly Power or Policy, opposed nothing but a divine Commission to very unkind and severe Usage. Now there is nothing to be found in human Nature, or in any supposeable State of things, that can possibly account for this Conduct, but either, that really they had a divine Commission, or else, that they were disordered in their Heads, and had lost their Senses. But their Writings prove they were Men of good Sense, and of a sound and excellent Judgment; therefore, nothing remains but that they really acted by a divine Commission.

THE Force of this Argument will be seen even still more evidently in the Case of the *Apostles*. No History in the World has been better preserved than that of the New Testament. There we find that Jesus Christ had gathered, while he was upon Earth, some Hundreds of Disciples, who all of them made Profession of Faith in him immediately after his Death, declaring that he was risen

from the Dead, and ascended into Heaven. Particularly, the Apostles, with several others, went about preaching the Gospel, first in *Judea*, then in all Parts of the *Roman Empire*, persuading Men to believe in Christ, affirming that he was the Son of God, that all the wonderful things related of him were true, and that they had a Commission from Heaven to teach, spread, and propagate his Religion every where, though they knew they should every where meet with the most violent Opposition, and the cruelest Treatment. Now, they must either be fully convinced in their own Minds that their Assertions were true ; or, if they knew that the Gospel, and their Commission to preach it, was a Forgery, we must conclude they were distracted, and had lost the Use of Understanding and Reason. For, supposing our blessed Lord never did or said any of those things, which the Apostles repeated ; and that they had no Instructions or Commission from him to preach the Gospel ; then we must suppose, they entered into a foolish and frantick Confederacy after this Manner.

“ MEN and Brethren, what that Seducer
 “ was, who lived among us the other Day,
 “ and how justly he suffered Death for his
 “ vile Imposture, we, of all Men living,
 “ have most Reason to know. And though
 “ others, who were less intimately acquainted
 “ with him, and his Ways of deceiving,
 “ might

“ might have some Opinion of his Worth
“ and Honesty, yet we, who were the
“ daily Companions of his Conversation,
“ saw nothing in him answerable to the
“ Greatness of his Pretensions, but that his
“ Design was, by all the boldest Arts of
“ Craft and Hypocrisy, to get a Name in
“ the World ; and therefore let us enter into
“ the most solemn Agreement to propagate
“ the Belief of this notorious Cheat among
“ Mankind, and to feign all manner of Lies
“ in its Confirmation ; to aver that we saw
“ him restore Eyes to the Blind, Ears to
“ the Deaf, and Life to the Dead ; and
“ though it be all false, yet let us confidently report and assert it to the very last
“ Drop of our Blood.

“ And because, after all his great and
“ glorious Pretences of being no less than
“ the Son of God, he was at last executed
“ as a vile Malefactor, with all the Circumstances of Shame and Dishonour, we
“ must agree among ourselves upon some
“ Story to wipe off this Disgrace. Let us
“ therefore resolve to affirm, with undaunted
“ Steddiuess, that after he was thus dishonourably crucified, the third Day he
“ rose again ; often conversed with us, in
“ the same familiar way as he had always
“ done before his Execution ; and that, after a while, we saw him ascend up into
“ Heaven. But then, we must be sure to

“ stand unalterably to this bold Falshood,
 “ and persevere to Death itself in the As-
 “ sertion. For what Absurdity is there in
 “ throwing away our Lives with no other
 “ Prospect than that of final Perdition ?
 “ And why should any Man think it hard
 “ to suffer Stripes, Bonds, Imprisonments,
 “ Reproaches, Dishonour, and Death itself,
 “ with this View only ? ”

THIS, or something like it, must be the
 Sense and Resolution of the Apostles and
 first Preachers of the Gospel, upon Suppo-
 sition they knew and believed, that the Gos-
 pel, and their Commission to preach it, was
 a Forgery. In this Case, a set of Men in
 private and low Life, without any manner
 of worldly Power or Interest ; in the certain
 Prospect of all manner of Opposition, of sa-
 crificing all that is dear and valuable in Life,
 of suffering all manner of Indignities, Tri-
 bulations, and Cruelties, and of exposing
 themselves to all the Terrors of Death ; must
 agree together to propagate throughout the
 whole World a System of Falshood, know-
 ing it to be such, directly contrary to their
 own Consciences, and to all their Interests
 both in this, and a future World.

NONE but a Company of Madmen, seized
 with the most extravagant Frenzy, and void
 of all Sense and Reason, could possibly join
 in such a Design. Whereas, if we peruse
 their Writings, we shall find that the Apost-
 tles

ties were Men of the finest Sense ; not only in full Possession of Understanding, but endowed with Knowledge and Wisdom in a Degree far beyond the most eminent Philosophers, or Masters of Reason, that ever had been in the World. They had a surprising Acquaintance with God and the Perfections of his Nature ; they set the Dispensations of his Wisdom, and the grand Designs of his Love, in the clearest and most amiable Light ; they well understood the whole System of Morality, and fixed every Branch of it upon its proper Foundation ; upon Principles either self-evident or allowed, they demonstrate and establish the whole Scheme of the Gospel. The Apostles were so far from being void of common Sense, that they were, in Fact, Men of the best Sense, of the most accurate and sublime Knowledge, of the most excellent and divine Spirit, next to their Lord and Master, that the World ever was acquainted with. Therefore their espousing and asserting the Gospel with so much Zeal could not proceed from any Disorder in their Heads.

THERE remains then, but one other Cause to which it can possibly be assigned, and it is this, that they were fully persuaded of the Truth of what they reported. And if they were fully persuaded of the Truth of what they reported, then it follows, that what they reported was certainly true. They were fully
satisfied

satisfied that it was true, and they were perfectly capable of receiving the clearest Evidence, and fullest Satisfaction. For observe, what they reported was not a Matter of meer Opinion, as in the Case of *Superstition*, nor a warm Suggestion or secret Impulse upon their Minds, as in the Case of *Enthusiasm*, but bare simple Matter of Fact. *We cannot, say they, but speak the things, which we have seen and heard.* Acts iv. 20. They were things, not which they conceited, or fancied, but which all of them, which great Multitudes of all sorts of People, had often and openly, for the Space of three or four Years together, seen with their Eyes, and heard with their Ears. And that they were not mistaken, or deceived, they were so fully satisfied, that they ventured all they had in the World, and Life itself, upon the Truth of what they had heard and seen. Consequently, their Assurance must be in the highest and fullest Degree of Satisfaction, leaving no Room for Doubt or Uncertainty.

HOWEVER some now a days may cavil and object, it is certain the Apostles, who were the familiar Companions of our Lord, had not the least Scruple or Difficulty about any thing related in the Gospel. They were perfectly satisfied they saw Christ upon Earth ; that they conversed with him ; that they heard the gracious Words which proceeded from his Mouth ; that they saw him
work

work all his Miracles ; that they saw him crucified and dead ; that they saw him alive again within a few Days ; that they heard him give them a Commission to preach the Gospel to all Nations, and promise them Success ; that they actually saw him ascend up into Heaven ; that the Holy Ghost actually fell upon them on the Day of Pentecost ; and that by his Influences they actually felt themselves indowed with new and miraculous Powers which accompanied them during the Course of their Ministry. And, to their being fully persuaded of the Truth of these things, and to no other possible Cause, can we assign their steady and zealous Endeavours to publish and spread the Gospel every where.

ADD to all this, that the Apostles were surprisngly successful in Preaching the Gospel. These Men in private and low Life, these defenceless Men, quite destitute of all temporal Power and Interest, only by the Force of Truth, the Truth of the Gospel which they preached, and the Power which they received from their Master, after he was gone to Heaven, encountered the Fury of the Multitude, the most inveterate Prejudices of the whole World, the Zeal of Superstition, the Hatred of the *Jews*, the Contempt of the *Greeks*, the Power of the *Romans*, the Pride of the *Philosophers*, and the Policy of *Statesmen* ; all these Difficulties they encountered, and surmounted them

them all. The Doctrine they taught, like the Sun, inlightened the whole World, in a manner, all at once ; and infinite Multitudes of People, both from Cities and Villages, were, by the Apostles Preaching, brought into the Church, like Corn into a Granary.

ALL this, taken together, amounts to a sufficient Proof, that the Apostles are to be credited when they affirm, that they received their Instructions and Commission from the Son of God ; and upon the Foot of this Argument alone, I am, for my own Part, as fully convinced that the Apostles were inspired by the Spirit of God, and that they have in their Writings infallibly delivered the Truth, in all things pertaining to the Christian Faith and Doctrine, as I am of any mathematical Proposition, or that twice Two is equal to Four. The Proof indeed is of a different kind, but fully convincing and satisfactory.

AND if our Lord came from God to teach us the Truth, and if his Apostles received from him their Instructions, Commission, and the holy Spirit, then it follows, that the Books of *Moses*, and of the Prophets, are undoubtedly the Word of God, and that the sacred History may be depended upon as a true Account of things ; for those Books are not only asserted by our Lord, and his Apostles, in general, to be the
Word

Word of God, given by divine Inspiration, and a true Rule of Knowledge, Faith, and Doctrine, but particular Passages are frequently produced in Proof or Confirmation of the Doctrine they taught ; and almost every single Part of the History, from the Beginning to the End, as of *Adam, Enoch, Noah, the Deluge, Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham, the Israelites*, and their miraculous Deliverance from *Egypt* and Settlement in the Land of *Canaan*, and all the surprising Events in their Story, are refered to as true and authentic.

WHAT Jesus Christ and his Apostles have reported and taught in the Books of the New Testament, is certainly the Truth, as they received it from God. And if so, then the Scriptures of the Old Testament are also given by Inspiration of God, a Storehouse of sacred and religious Knowledge, of undoubted Credit and Veracity, for our Lord and his Apostles have represented and established them as such.

THUS the frequent and express Assertions of *Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles*, taken in Connection with their proper Circumstances, is a Proof of the Truth of Revelation as it stands in the Scriptures.

LET me recommend it to your serious Consideration, that we certainly have in our Hands an inestimable Treasure, a Revelation from Heaven, a sure Word of Prophecy,
shining

shining as a Light in a dark Place, a Magazine of the most excellent Knowledge, clearly displaying the divine Nature and Perfections, opening fully the Dispensations of his Wisdom and Goodness from the Beginning of the World ; shewing the Riches of his Grace and Love to Mankind, delivering the most excellent Precepts of Wisdom, Truth, and Holiness, for the purifying our Hearts, and directing our Conversation, and proposing the noblest Motives to ingage us to, and encourage us in, the Practice of all Virtue and Goodness. We cannot over-value this Blessing, neither can we despise it without great Guilt. We are accountable to God for the Use we make of it. Let us esteem it in Proportion to its Worth, and study it as the Rule of our Life, as the grand Source of our Comfort and Hope, and as an infallible Guide to eternal Glory.



C H A P. XLI.

The divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures, proved from the Harmony and Agreement of the several WRITERS of them.

HAVING gon through the first Argument, I proceed — To prove the divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures ; which we may do from the Harmony and Agreement of the several Writers of them.

THEY are not a Book compiled by a single Author, nor by many Hands acting in Confederacy in the same Age ; in which Case there would be no Difficulty in composing a consistent Scheme, nor would it be any Wonder to find the several Parts in a just and close Connection ; but the Scriptures were done by several Hands, in very different Conditions of Life, from the Throne and Scepter down to the lowest Degree, and in very distant Ages, through the long Space of about 1500 Years, when the World must have put on a quite new Face, and Men must have different Interests to pursue ; which naturally would have led a Spirit of Imposture to have varied its Schemes, and to have adapted them to different Stations in the
World,

432 *The Harmony and Agreement of*
World, and to the different Turns and
Changes in every Age.

DAVID wrote about 400 Years after *Moses*, and *Isaiah* about 250 after *David*, and *Matthew* more than 700 Years after *Isaiah*. And yet these Authors, with all the other Prophets and Apostles, write in perfect Harmony, confirming the Authority of their Predecessors, labouring to reduce the People to the Observance of their Instructions, and loudly exclaiming against the Neglect and Contempt of them, and denouncing the severest Judgments upon such as continued disobedient.

THIS was the principal Work of the Prophets in a long Succession. And it is well known our Lord came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil, *i. e.* to vindicate and illustrate their Meaning, to compleat what was imperfect, and to answer the highest Ends of what was typical and figurative. Now this is a very strong Proof, that the Scriptures were throughout dictated by one and the same Spirit, which could be no other than the Spirit of God, and of Truth. It is allowed, as in the Case of *Mahometism*, that an Imposture, or religious Fraud, may be handed down from one Age to another, but not by several different Persons, all making equal Pretensions to a divine Authority and Commission. For in this Case they are to be considered, not as a Succession of Teachers, deriving their Doctrine
from

from one common Original, but as single and distinct Impostors ; and consequently, every one in a distant Age, and in a quite different State of things, would set up for himself, and seek a singular Glory by building upon a distinct and separate Foundation from others. It would signify little to an Impostor, who has no other Intention but to advance his own Honor and Reputation, to pretend a Commission from Heaven, only to give Reputation to another Deceiver, by confirming what he has already established.

THEREFORE as the Writers of the holy Scriptures, though they all claim a divine Authority, yet write in perfect Connection and Harmony, mutually confirming the Doctrine and Testimony of each other, and concurring to establish the very same religious Truths and Principles, it is a strong Proof that they all derive their Instructions from the same Fountain, the Wisdom of God, and were indeed under the Direction and Illumination of his Spirit.

WE may take another Argument from ourselves, as we make Profession of Faith in *Jesus Christ*. For our Profession of Christianity, who dwell in the uttermost Parts of the Earth, is a Proof that the Gospel spread itself over all the *Roman Empire* ; for, from *Jerusalem*, it came to us by a gradual Progress, and advancing from one Country to

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another,

another, arrived at length in these Islands of *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*. No body can doubt or deny that the christian Faith is, and for many Ages past has been, embraced in all those numerous and distant Lands, which once composed the *Roman* Empire, and even in Countries far beyond the utmost Bounds thereof. In all these spacious Tracts the christian Faith, in one Form or other, has been professed; and Baptism and the Lord's-Supper, in one Form or other, have been administered, in a Succession of Ages, quite up to the times of the Apostles, and of our Lord.

It is most certain that Baptism and the Lord's-Supper, those Summaries of the whole Gospel, were not instituted in any following Age, by any one Party of Christians, but have been handed down to us, and to all Parties among Christians, from the very Mouth and Institution of *Jesus Christ*. No Fact can be more evident than this. From our Lord therefore, and his Apostles, the Gospel spread over the greatest Part of the known World, which before the Publication of the Gospel was universally involved in Idolatry, established by long Custom and human Laws, strongly guaranteed by all the Power and Learning of the World, by all the Zeal of the wildest Superstition, by all the Violence and Obstinacy of Prejudice, by all the Blindness of profound Ignorance, and
all

all the incorrigible Perverseness of corrupt and dissolute Manners. A Complication of Causes which would for ever have bid Defiance to any Philosophy or Wisdom of the few that can be supposed to attain a better Sense in the midst of universal Darkness and Depravity. But the Gospel gained a most compleat and extensive Victory over all these, demolished every Idol in the Heathen World, and every where erected the Trophies of a conquering *Jesus*.

Now this surprising Change, which is notorious to all Mankind, must be effected either by human Power and Policy, or by a divine and supernatural Influence. By human Power and Policy great Revolutions have been brought about in all Ages and Parts of the World. And therefore we do not wonder at the Spread of the *Mahometan* or *Turkish* Religion, as it was propagated by the Sword, under the Conduct of a mighty Warrior and Politician, who by Ravages, Bloodshed, and Desolations, conquered many Nations and Kingdoms, laid the Foundation of a potent and spacious Empire, and thus by Violence opened a Way for the Reception, and extensive Profession of his newly devised Religion. But the Religion of *Jesus* was triumphant, not only without the Aid of human Power or Policy, but even in direct Opposition to it.

FOR the plain Fact is this. A Poor Young Man, about 30 Years of Age, called *Jesus*, a Carpenter's Son, of no Education or Learning, without House or Habitation, without the least human Interest or Influence, begins to preach up Reformation among the *Jews*, the most suspicious and bigotted People in the World ; declares himself the Son of God, gathers a few Disciples, Persons in the same low and naked Condition with himself, Fishermen, Publicans, and such like, and sends them about Preaching, what he called the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. He was despised by the Generality, and greatly opposed and harrassed by the Men of Power and Learning. However, he shifted for himself as well as he could ; but after he had preached Three or Four Years, they caught him and crucified him as an infamous Malefactor.

THIS direful Event, which would have totally ruined an Impostor, he plainly foresaw and foretold ; but not in the least discouraged by the Prospect, he ordered his Disciples to go and preach his Gospel over all the World, promising that after his Death he would assist them with Power from Heaven, in virtue of which they should certainly succeed. They believed him, they set out, they preached up their crucified Master as the Lord and Saviour of all Mankind ;
and,

and, which is very strange, under the Conduct and Influence of a Master who was dead to this World, and gone to the other State, they prevailed ; and in spite of the Fury of the Multitude, the most inveterate Prejudices of the whole World, the Zeal of Superstition, the Hatred of the *Jews*, the Contempt of the *Greeks*, the Power of the *Romans*, the Pride of *Philosophers*, and the Policy of *Statesmen*, their Doctrine, like the Sun, almost at once, enlightened the World, overthrew the whole System of Pagan Idolatry and Religion, and advanced as far as our own Country in the darkest and remotest Corner of the Earth.

OF this we ourselves, we Christians, are living Monuments and Proofs ; we have received the Gospel, we own it a glorious and shining Light, we have renounced the Idolatry and vain Conversation of our Fathers, we acknowledge and worship the living and true God, we confess and adore the crucified Jesus, our King and Head, and hope for eternal Life through him. Now, there is no possible Way of accounting for this, but by allowing that *Jesus* really was the Son of God, that he really rose again from the Dead, and ascended up into Heaven, and that he actually from thence sent his Disciples the Aids and Powers which he had promised, and which were so far above all that is human, that they carried their own

Evidence along with them, and rendered their Doctrine so surprisingly successful.

AND as *Jesus* did not send his Disciples to preach to all the World, till after his Death, and as he then, after his Death, did actually furnish them with all miraculous Powers to render their Doctrine effectual, this is the most convincing Proof that his Doctrine was divine, and that he himself was actually gone to Heaven, and lived there in the highest Interest and Favor with God. For that an Impostor, a Deceiver, hateful to the God of Truth, should, after his Death, be able to animate, instruct, authorize, and impower a Company of Men, otherwise destitute of all Assistance, and labouring under all possible Difficulties, to throw down all the Religions of the World, and to erect a new one in their Stead, is utterly impossible. It is therefore certain, beyond all Doubt, that *Jesus Christ* was sent from Heaven to reveal the Gospel to the World. And as we are very sure that we have in our Hands the Writings of his Apostles, we may be as sure, that they contain a Revelation from Heaven, or that Doctrine, which *Christ* received from God, and delivered to his Disciples. And if so, then the Writings of the Old Testament are also the Word of God, for *Christ* and his Apostles declare them to be such. Therefore all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God.

THE same thing may be proved by the long Train of miraculous Operations, which could be effected only by a divine Power, and which were wrought in Confirmation of the Mission of Prophets and Apostles ; as also from the Spirit of Prophecy predicting future Events at a great Distance of time, which no human Wisdom or Sagacity could possibly foresee, and yet were actually and punctually fulfilled in Correspondence to the Prediction. But as a minute Detail of Particulars would perhaps be somewhat tedious, I shall single out one Instance of the divine miraculous Power, and the Truth of the prophetic Spirit ; which Instance has been in all Ages a standing Proof of Revelation, and which still exists, and is before the Eyes of the present Generation, in almost all Countries of the World ; I mean, the present State and Being of the *Jews*. For this People, as they were originally chosen to be the Repository, or Storehouse of divine Knowledge, by the Revelation which was given to them, so they were also intended to be visible Proofs of the Truth of it in all Ages and Parts of the World. Our Lord, contrary to all human Probability, while he was on Earth, foretold the Destruction of the Jewish Temple and Polity, and their Dispersion among all Nations, which was exactly accomplished in about 40 Years after. And in this dispersed State they have now con-

tinued about 1700 Years, in great Numbers, and in great Ignominy and Contempt, and yet quite distinct and separate from all the People among whom they lived.

THIS appears to me a standing Miracle ; nor can we attribute it to any other Cause, but the Will and extraordinary Interposition of Heaven, when it is considered, that of all the famous Nations of the World, who might have been distinguished from others with great Advantage, and the most illustrious Marks of Honor and Renown, as the ancient *Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans*, who all in their Turns held the Empire of the World, and were, with great Ambition, the Lords of Mankind ; yet these, even in their own Countries, are dissolved into the Bulk of Mankind, nor is there a Person upon Earth can boast he is descended from those renowned and imperial Ancestors.

WHEREAS a small Nation, generally despised and hated, and which, though now upon pretty good Terms with us, both *Pagans* and pretended *Christians* have for many Ages treated with the utmost Insult, Indignity, Outrage and cruelty, and which therefore one would imagine, every Soul that belonged to it should have gladly disowned, and have been willing to have lost the odious Name by mixing with any other Nation ; yet, I say, this hated People, harrassed and
butchered

butchered more or less by all Mankind, banished and bandyed from one Country to another, and who scarce had any Peace till Trade and Traffic brought the World to a better Temper, and more favourable Treatment of them : I say, this hated People have, under all Temptations to the contrary, and against the ordinary Course of things, continued in a Body *distinct* and *separate* from all Mankind, even in a State of Dispersion, for about 1700 Years.

THIS demonstrates, that the Wisdom which formed them into a peculiar People, that they have almost ever since the Deluge, for about 3600 Years, remained in a distinct and separate State, and are still likely to do so, is not human but divine. For no human Wisdom or Power could form, or however could execute, such a vast, extensive Design. It must be the Wisdom and Power of that God alone, who is the same in every Age, and who in every Age has exercised a peculiar Providence over his peculiar People, the Descendents of *Abraham* his Servant. And thus the present State and Being of the *Jews* is every where a publick and standing Evidence of the Truth of Revelation, in two Respects.

1. WITH Respect to their long Dispersion, or Captivity, as they call it, and the various Calamities they were to suffer therein.

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THIS is foretold in several Places, particularly, *Deut. xxviii. 63, 64, 65. The Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and bring you to nought, as to their singular Privileges and Enjoyments ; and ye shall be plucked off from the Land, whither ye go to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all People, from one End of the Earth, even unto the other — and among those Nations thou shalt find no Ease, neither shall the Sole of thy Foot have Rest ; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling Heart, and failing Eyes, and Sorrow of Mind. Ezek. xxxvi. 19. I scattered them among the Heathen, and they were dispersed among the Countries. I will scatter thee among the Heathen, and disperse thee among the Countries. And our Lord predicts, Luke xxi. 24. And they, the Jews, shall fall by the Edge of the Sword, and shall be led away captive into all Nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.*

2. WITH Respect to their being preserved in their Dispersion, and preserved as a distinct and separate Body, this also was plainly predicted. *Deut. xxvi. 44. Yet for all that, when they be in the Land of their Enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my Covenant with them. Jer. xxx. 10, 11. Fear not, O my Servant, Jacob ; neither be dismayed, O Israel ; for lo, I will save*

save thee from afar, and thy Seed from the Land of their Captivity ; for though I make a full End of all Nations, whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full End of thee. Jer. xxxi. 10. Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye Nations, and declare it in the Isles afar off ; and say, he that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a Shepherd doth his Flock. Ver. 35, 36, 37. Thus saith the Lord, who gives the Sun for a Light by Day, and the Ordinances of the Moon and of the Stars for a Light by Night ; who divides the Sea when the Waves thereof rore ; the Lord of Hosts is his Name. If those Ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the Seed of Israel also shall cease from being a Nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, if Heaven above can be measured, and the Foundations of the Earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the Seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord. Rom. xi. 25, 26. Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the Fulness of the Gentiles be come in ; and so all Israel shall be saved ; as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away Ungodliness from Jacob.

THESE, and many more Passages, too numerous to be now quoted, plainly shew that it was the Design of divine Providence to preserve the Jewish Nation, in their Dispersion, and to preserve them a distinct and
separate

separate People in order to their future Restoration. And we, and many other Nations, at this Day, see these Predictions made good in the present State of the *Jews*, who have been so long, and still are miraculously preserved separate from all other People. Now this is, in my Opinion, a standing Miracle, a wonderful Work of divine Providence, and as strong a Proof of Revelation, as if we were to see the Dead, every Year, rise out of their Graves in Confirmation of it. For we have still among us, after so long a time, and so many various Revolutions in human Affairs, the peculiar People, whom God, above Three Thousand Years ago, separated unto himself; the very People who are the principal Subject of Revelation, and who are said there to be the principal Objects of his Providence, and we see them at this Day to be so in a very surprising Manner.

THEREFORE in their present State we may plainly read the ancient Promise made to *Abraham*, the Head and Root of the Nation, the many wonderful Works wrought for them from first to last, and the Truth of prophetic Predictions; in the present State of the *Jews* we may read the Truth of the Gospel, for the Rejection of which God rejected them, and scattered them over the Face of the Earth. In short, we are sure there was such a People as the *Jews*, to whom

whom God delivered the Revelation of his Will in ancient times, for this very People exist among us at this Day, and preserve among them that very Revelation, with the most sacred and religious Care. And we are sure the numerous Predictions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, relating to their future State, are true, for we see them made good in the present State of the *Jews*; and therefore we may be as sure that the holy Scriptures are given by Inspiration of God; for only the Spirit of God could foretel such Events; and the same Spirit which foretold these Events, spake in the Prophets and Apostles, and inspired them with all that divine Wisdom and Knowledge which we find in all their Writings.

I might add the long Apostacy, and general Corruption of the Professors of Christianity, so plainly foretold, and under such express and particular Characters, in the apostolic Writings. This all the World may see has been abundantly fulfilled in the Church of ROME. Now, only the Spirit of God could foresee such a distant, and deplorable State of things, which no human Probability could have conjectured would have risen out of the pure and heavenly Doctrine of Christ. But the Spirit which predicted this Event, is the very same which was poured out upon the Apostles, and enlightened their Minds with the Knowledge
of

of the Gospel ; therefore the Apostles, who wrote the New Testament, had the Spirit of God, and were enlightened by it.

By these Arguments I am pointing out to you the only Fountain of Life and Happiness, a Mine infinitely more valuable than of Gold and precious Stones ; a plentiful Magazine of heavenly and everlasting Wealth, an inexhaustible Fund of solid Comfort and Peace, the holy Scriptures, the Word of the ever blessed God ; a Treasure of immense Value, which we have in our Possession, if we are wise to make a right Improvement of it.

THERE remains yet another Argument to prove the divine Authority and Original of Scripture, taken from the internal Excellency of it. This I shall consider in the following Chapter.



C H A P. XLII.

*The internal Worth and Excellency of the
SCRIPTURES considered, as containing the
best Principles of Knowledge, Holiness, and
Comfort.*

THE Arguments which I have already advanced, are taken from the external Evidence that the Scriptures are the Word of God. Proceed we now to consider their internal Worth and Excellency, which more fully and directly demonstrates their divine Original, and falls in with the second Part of my Design, which was to consider the Use and Importance of the holy Scriptures.

CONSIDERING the Scriptures as a Gift and Blessing from God, the Father of Lights and the Fountain of all Good, for our Improvement in Knowledge and Holiness, in order to our being advanced to eternal Glory and Happiness, we may in general conclude, that the Scriptures are in Worth and Usefulness fully proportionable to the Wisdom and Goodness of the Donor, and to the noble and beneficent End for which they are intended. They are a glorious Display of heavenly Light, irradiating the Darkness of the World, which otherwise would have been

been involved in the blackest Night of Ignorance. Let it be observed to the Honor of the Bible, that it is the Book, which, under the divine Providence, has preserved in the World the Knowledge of the one true God, which otherwise must have been lost and extinguished. For when God in his infinite Wisdom was pleased to call *Abraham*, and separate his Family to the Purposes of Revelation, Idolatry, even in those early Days, not long after the Flood, was so far spread, that even *Abraham's* Family were Idolaters, and served other Gods. And so far did the Corruption of Religion prevail, that all Nations, losing the true Idea of the one God and Father of all, fell into the foulest Idolatry, the grossest Superstition, and all the abominable Vices in Connection with them, except the Nation of the *Jews*, who enjoyed the Word and Revelation of God. And it was the Word and Revelation of God, at the time our Saviour came into the World, which inlightened the *Gentiles*, and so generally reduced them to the Worship and Obedience of the everlasting *Jehovah*, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth.

WHAT Knowledge of the living God, what Detestation of Idol-Worship, what Belief of a future State of Rewards and Punishment, MAHOMET has propagated in the World, he received partly from *Jews*, and partly from *Christians*, who had learnt those things

things from Revelation ; though, as he could not read himself, with much Confusion, and a large Mixture of Fiction and Falshood. Is any Part of the christian World sunk into Superstition and Idolatry ? It is because they have shut up the Scriptures, forbidden the free Use of them, and commanded the People under Pain of Damnation to follow other Guides. Is any Part of the christian World reformed from the gross Errors, and monstrous Corruptions of Popery ? It is because they have asserted the Authority of the Scriptures, resumed the Use of them, and opened them again to free and common Perusal. Nay further—Is the Deist, or the Man, who in a christian Land denies or disparages Revelation, acquainted with the first Cause, the Fountain of all Being, Power, Life, and Happiness, the universal Sovereign ? Has he a clear Idea of the System of Duties which we owe to our Maker, and to one another ; or any Expectation of a future State of Felicity ? It is because he has lighted his twinkling Candle at this resplendent Sun, which he unnaturally, ungratefully, and weakly Endeavours to extinguish. I say *weakly*, because this Sun, which God, ever since the Creation of his Church and Kingdom, has caused to shine in the moral World, shall by his Providence be preserved, and shine with a growing Lustre, so long as the Sun in the Firmament shall endure.

UNDER God, it must be owned the instrumental Cause of all the true Religion and Piety, that is to be found in the World, which, for aught we can see, notwithstanding all the Philosophy and Wisdom of Man, would have been totally lost among all the Nations; and it shall be established more and more, it shall shine forth more and more, it shall be honoured more and more, in the Truth of its Doctrines, in the Wisdom of its Precepts and Instructions, in the Accomplishment of its Predictions and Promises, and in the Appearing of our Lord at the last Day, to receive into his Joy all that know God, and obey his Gospel. It shall be established, it shall shine, it shall be honoured, when those, who now despise and disparage it, shall be confounded and perish for ever.

Thus much may be truly said of the Usefulness of Scripture in general; which gives it infinitely the Preference to all Books of meer human Composure, that it has been the Means of preserving in the World the grand Principles of Religion, the Knowledge of the Being and Perfections of God, and of that true spiritual Worship, which alone pleases him, and ennobles, purifies, and comforts our Souls. And just in Proportion as the Bible is received, esteemed, and diligently studied, true Religion has prevailed, and will always prevail and flourish. On the other hand, in Proportion as the Scriptures are
unknown,

unknown, neglected, abused, and perverted, Ignorance, Idolatry, Irreligion, Error, Superstition, and Wickedness, have and will spread their Gloom, and more or less infect Nations and particular Persons.

THE Scriptures contain Principles, which must be allowed to be of a superior and most excellent kind. The best Principles of Knowledge, Holiness, and Comfort.

IN the Scriptures we find the best Principles of Knowledge. There the Mind expatiates in a boundless Field of heavenly Light, and clearly views the Prospects of Truth, where the Eye of meer Nature could never have penetrated. There you see the Being of God asserted, his Nature and Perfections, his glorious Majesty, and universal Sovereignty described with the justest Propriety of Sentiment, and Magnificence of Language. There you read—" That the ever-
" lasting God, the Lord, the Possessor of all
" Being, of all Wisdom and Power, made
" the Earth and created Man upon it ; that
" he stretched out the Heavens, and com-
" manded all their Hosts. He measured the
" Waters in the hollow of his Hand, and
" meted out the Heavens with a Span,
" and comprehended the Dust of the Earth
" in a Measure, and weighed the Mountains
" in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance.
" He toucheth the Mountains, and they
" smoke, he looks upon the Earth, and it
" trembleth ;

“ trembleth. Behold, the Nations are as a
“ Drop of a Bucket, and are counted as the
“ small Dust of the Earth. Behold, he takes
“ up the Isles as a very little thing. All
“ Nations are before him as nothing, and
“ they are counted to him as less than no-
“ thing and Vanity.

“ THE whole Universe rests wholly upon
“ his Arm, and is entirely subject to the
“ Disposals of his Will. Lift up your Eyes
“ on high, and behold, who has created
“ these things, that brings out their Host by
“ Number ? He calls them all by Name,
“ by the Greatness of his Might, for that
“ he is strong in Power, not one of them
“ fails ; in Understanding he is infinite ; he
“ is mighty in Wisdom, wonderful in Coun-
“ sel, and excellent in Working. He fills
“ Heaven and Earth, nor can any hide him-
“ self in secret Places from his all-penetrat-
“ ing Eye. The Earth is full of his Glory
“ and Riches ; and his Providence is per-
“ petually exercised about all and every one
“ of his Creatures. All Power belongs to
“ him, he can help and cast down, he can
“ save and destroy, and nothing is too hard
“ for the Lord. God is Love ; the Lord is
“ good and doth Good, he is good to all,
“ and his tender Mercies are over all his
“ Works ; he is daily loading us with Be-
“ nefits. The Righteous he will bless, to
“ them he will give Grace and Glory, and
“ even

“ even to the Wicked the Lord is plenteous
“ and rich in Mercy. He is a God of
“ Truth, and without Iniquity, just and right
“ is he. He is glorious in Holiness, and
“ of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, neither
“ can he look on Iniquity. And this God,
“ so great, so glorious, is our God, our
“ Maker, Owner, and Ruler, our Father,
“ Shepherd, and Friend.”

THIS is the Doctrine of Scripture ; and a Sentence or two in this holy Book will give you much clearer Conceptions of God than all the Volumes of Philosophy, wrote by Strangers to Revelation. There you are taught the various Dispensations of the divine Wisdom and Goodness, from the Beginning of the World to this Day, and even to the End of Time. There you see the excellent Schemes which he has formed for the Instruction, Reformation, and Happiness of the Children of Men ; and we read with Pleasure the numerous Instances of his Favor to the Righteous, and with Dread the Terrors of his Vengeance upon the Wicked. There we find a twofold Covenant, of Works, which threatens Death to every Transgression ; of Grace, which grants the Benefit of Repentance and Pardon ; and promises all needful Supplies of Strength to the Sincere and Upright. There we learn how he erected a Kingdom among the Nations, or a peculiar Congregation, to prevent the

universal Corruption of the World, and, like a Beacon upon a Hill, to diffuse the Light of divine Knowledge in the Darkneſs of the Earth. At length we ſee the Meſſiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the World, appear, to take away Sin, to bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs, or Salvation, to illuſtrate the Grace of God, and give the plaineſt Explications of his Will and our Duty; to ſhew the future World in the cleareſt and moſt awful View, and to appoint the moſt powerful Means to attract our Hearts to God, and to guide our Feet into the Ways of Peace.

In his Goſpel we ſee the Dead, ſmall and great, reſtored to Life, and appearing before his Judgment-Seat, to receive a Sentence according to what they have done in the Body. There he has opened the Glories of Heaven to our Sight, and ſhewn to our Faith the far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, the aſſured Conſequence of patient Continuance in well-doing; he has alſo uncovered the bottomleſs Pit, the Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever, which will be the terrible Portion of all impenitent Workers of Iniquity. In the Scriptures the State of the Church to the End of the World is deſcribed, and we ſee the preſent State of things correſpondent to prophetic Deſcriptions.

I ſhould exceed my Bounds only to mention the ſeveral Heads of Inſtruction and Knowledge

Knowledge with which the Word of God is crowded. I shall mention but one more, and that is the Design of our present Being in this World, which is there represented, agreeably to the Appearances of things, and the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to be not for Enjoyment, but for Trial ; not to gain temporal Pleasures or Possessions, but to discipline our Souls, and to prepare them for immortal Honor and Glory. In particular, the many Afflictions incident to our Frailty, are set in a true and encouraging Light, as the Discipline and Correction of our heavenly Father ; not for our Destruction, but for our Improvement in Holiness, to purify our Spirits from Sensuality, to draw our Regards to things heavenly and eternal, to exercise our Faith, Hope, Patience, and every Virtue, which is our real Excellency and best Qualification for everlasting Happiness. This is a brief and very imperfect Specimen of Scripture Doctrine ; which, even in this cursory View, assisted a little with sober Reflection, must, to an impartial Judgment, moderately acquainted with what the wisest of Pagans have taught, appear infinitely superior to the Darkness and Uncertainty of meer human Knowledge and Wisdom.

IN the Scriptures you will find the best Principles of *Holiness*, or of that State of Mind whereby we are habitually devoted to God and Truth. For there we are shewn

the Dignity and Worth of our Being, vastly beyond any thing we could have hammered out of our own Reflections. There we read that we are made in the Image of God, inspired with Understanding, raised vastly in our Faculties above the Beasts or the Fowls, and made for Ends proportionably grand and noble ; not for the mean Purposes of Time and Sense, but for God, for his Honor and Favor, to show forth his Praise, and for ever enjoy his Goodness. And every Obligation resulting from this Superiority of Nature, and the highest and most excellent Purposes of our Being, is with the greatest Propriety and Force urged upon us. In every Page of the holy Scriptures the Love of God smiles upon us with an attractive and endearing Aspect, to draw our Affections to him, and to give a Constancy and Steadiness to our Virtue in the midst of so many and so strong Temptations, when we know that only such an Adherence to Truth and Righteousness will finally and for ever give us an Interest in our heavenly Father's Blessing.

IN the Scriptures we have the divine Displeasure against all the Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men set upon its true Foundation, the odious and pernicious Nature of Sin ; which is in itself false, and mischievous, the only proper and radical Evil in the Universe, and which alone can deprive us of Happiness, and subject us to Misery. In
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the Word of God, his Favor to Men of Piety and Virtue is also set upon its proper Foundation, the amiable and excellent Nature of true Holiness ; which in itself is true and salutary, the only proper and radical Good, the Glory of our Nature, and which alone can render us fit to dwell for ever with God. — There we are kindly encouraged by the divine Grace to think of our Ways, and by true Repentance to turn from whatever is sinful to the Obedience of God. — There we are directed frequently to scrutinize our Hearts, to banish thence every corrupt Principle, and to keep the Spring of Action within us pure from every disorderly Thought and Inclination ; to guard our Spirits with a watchful Eye from every impure Motion and Suggestion, to be vigilant against every Attack of Temptation, that we may keep ourselves undefiled in the good Ways of God. — There we are instructed in the most perfect and reasonable Sobriety, Temperance, and Self-denial, and warned of the Danger of every sensual Snare and Allurement. — There this perishing Body, with whatever can delight and adorn it ; there this present World, with whatever in it can engage our Affections and Esteem, are fully exposed to the Judgment and Censures of Reason, and manifestly shewn to be Emptiness and Vanity, infinitely below the Excellence and Worth of immortal Spirits, and therefore

therefore infinitely unfit to be pursued at the Expence of our present Integrity, or future Felicity.

IN the sacred Writings we find a rich Magazine of all proper Means for the Sanctification of our Souls, and our most successful Advances in the Life of God. — There we see that the divine Power and Spirit is ready with its mighty Aids, to assist, enlighten, and strengthen our Spirits, in Proportion to our sincere Desires and Endeavours in Godliness; and there we are directed every Day, and at all times, to seek unto God, by fervent and believing Prayer, for his Guidance and Protection, and are assured we shall never seek his Face in vain. — There, in the holy Scriptures, we are taught the Ordinances of Religion, both publick and private, in the conscientious Use of which we shall grow up into Christ Jesus; particularly, we are commanded to set apart a competent Portion of our time, every Day, and to keep the Sabbath holy every Week; that by serious Meditation upon God's Word, and by pouring out our Hearts before him in Prayer and Thanksgiving, we may renew our spiritual Strength, be more and more confirmed in the Habits of Holiness, and find ourselves still advancing nearer to heavenly Perfection. This Sketch of the Principles of Holiness, to be derived from the Scriptures, clearly proves their divine Original and Excellence, as it sets them vastly above
any

any thing meer human Wisdom can discover or devise.

IN the Scriptures we also find the best Principles of Comfort and Refreshment to the Soul. How needful are such Principles in a Scene of Affliction, Sin, and Weakness ! In general, under how many amiable Characters, under how many sweet Encouragements, are we invited to trust in the Almighty and Eternal ; to look unto him, and make his Name, his Goodness, and Power, our Refuge in every Want, Danger, Difficulty, and Conflict ? Being assured that he cares for us, while we hope in him, and that he will never leave us nor forsake us. That however he may permit our Sufferings and Grievs, he can never forget us, and will make all things, how bitter soever, work together for our Good. Heaven is at all times open to our Complaints and Supplications, and the Throne of God, which is a Throne of Grace, is easy of Access to the Breathings and Desires of our Hearts.

ARE we loaded with a Sense of Guilt ? See the Blood of Jesus the Security and Seal of our Pardon. Are we humbled under a Sense of our own Unworthiness ? Hear the Voice of divine Grace freely conferring a Dignity upon us far superior to all the Honors of this World. Look into the Scriptures ; view the unsearchable Riches of *Christ* ; behold the Love of our God and Redeemer,

Redeemer ; of his own gracious Will, and meer good Pleasure, he has begotten us, he is become our Father, he has justified us, he has bestowed upon us the Honours of his Children, he has made us welcome to all the Blessings of his Covenant, and to all the Glories of his Kingdom. Fearful and dejected Soul, look into the Gospel and see thy God shining in all the Beams of free, rich, and heavenly Grace. Be of good Comfort, thy Sins are forgiven, thy Interest in the Covenant is sure ; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is thy God and Father, and thou art welcome to all the Treasures of his Mercy and Goodness. Only rejoice in this Grace, and live agreeably to it in all Faith, Purity and Holiness, Love and Goodness.

ARE you afraid your own Weakness and surrounding Temptations should draw your Regards from God, pervert your Minds, and cause you to fall short of Salvation ? Fear not, thou Worm *Jacob*, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God ; *I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the Right-hand of my Righteousness*, or Salvation. Only cleave unto God, by Faith in Christ, with Purpose of Heart, and he who has begun a good Work will certainly perfect it unto the Day of Christ. You shall be more than Conquerors through him that has loved us. Doth the World frown,

frown, and pour its Sorrows into your Breasts? Look to the heavenly World, the Glory that shall be revealed in the Saints. That is your Home and Country, that is your Portion and Inheritance; and if you regard it as such, you will rejoice in the Hope of the Glory of God, and be raised far above the Cares and Fears of this low and transitory State. Such strong Consolations the holy Scriptures supply, and therefore their Author is undoubtedly the God of all Consolation; for no Wisdom of Man could ever possibly have opened to us such a Fountain of Joy and Refreshment. And thus we see the Scriptures contain, beyond all Dispute, the best Principles of Knowledge, of Holiness, and Comfort.

It is no less evident that they deliver the best Precepts for directing all our Actions. Such Precepts are reducible to Three Heads, our Duty to God, to our Neighbour, and to ourselves. God we are taught to worship with a sincere Admiration of his Glory and Perfections, with profound Reverence of his Greatness, with humble Adoration of his Sovereignty, with the highest Love and Esteem for his Excellency and Amiability, with Joy and Gratitude for his Goodness, and with a Heart truly devoted to his Honor, and determined for his Obedience. To our Neighbour we are directed to perform not only Justice, Truth, and Equity, but also

also unfeigned Charity, the most extensive Kindness and Benevolence. To ourselves we owe Self-Preservation and Self-Government, and the Scriptures admonish us to take the wisest Care of our Being, by cultivating and guarding our Minds, and by mortifying all inordinate Affections and Passions. In short, all that our Reason can find in the Law or Religion of Nature, is, without the least Omission, transcribed into Revelation ; and moreover, the Wisdom of God has not only perfected and supplied our Deficiencies, but has discovered to us the Riches of Goodness, Knowledge, and Power, infinitely beyond what our natural Faculties could ever have attained.

THUS we are furnished both with the most perfect Rules of Virtue and Godliness, and also with the most powerful Motives to the Observance of them. And thus the Scriptures are a Storehouse of the most sacred and useful Knowledge, adapted to the Improvement of our Minds in whatever is good and excellent, beyond all Competition and Objection. But as those only can object against them, who never read them, or never with serious Minds, if you would know what the Scriptures are, if you would know whether they are of God, read them, study them, meditate upon them, and you cannot fail of being convinced of their Excellency and divine Original.

SUCH

SUCH being the intrinsic Excellency of the Scriptures, it is no Wonder it entered into our Lord's Thoughts, and was the Object of his Care in his last Moments, even amidst the Pains and Agonies of Death. Its being the Subject of his Thoughts at a time, when his Thoughts turned upon nothing but what was infinitely momentous ; his being concerned upon the Cross, that no Point of Scripture should want its full Evidence, or Establishment, is a Demonstration of the high Worth and Excellency of Scripture. Under all his preceding Sufferings, which must be exceeding bitter, he never dropped the least Expression of the Sorrow and Anguish he felt, but endured it with the Silence of the most perfect Meekness and Patience. We must therefore conclude, he would not have opened his Mouth to signify his grievous Distress, when on the Cross, *why hast thou forsaken me ?* had it not been for the sake of expressing his Trust in God ; nor would he have mentioned his Thirst, but out of regard to divine Revelation, and its Accomplishment.

OUR Lord has, all along, from first to last, shown the highest Respect to the Word of God. With this Sword he did combat and conquer Satan, when tempted by him in the Wilderness. He always in the Course of his Ministry appeals to it as the Standard of religious Truth, revealing the Will of
God,

God, and explaining his Dispensations. He declares he came not to destroy so much as one Tittle of the Law or the Prophets, but to compleat, vindicate, and illustrate them ; assuring us that as their Original is divine, their Honors shall be perpetual ; and that, *till Heaven and Earth pass away*, and the whole Frame of Nature be dissolved, *not one jot shall pass*, or perish, *from the Law*, or from Revelation, *till all be fulfilled*. John v. 39. He directs the *Jews* to search the Scriptures, as they rightly apprehended the Doctrine of eternal Life was contained in them; and as they testified of him.

As his Sufferings drew nearer, he frequently takes Notice of the Fulfilment of the Scriptures in the several Steps and Events which led to them. *Matt. xxvi. 31, 54. John xiii. 18. xv. 25.* That the Scriptures might be fulfilled in his Sufferings and Death, he would not allow his Disciples to rescue him out of the Hands of those who came to seize him. *Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.* Had he prayed to the Father he would have given him more than Twelve Legions of Angels ; *but how then*, says he, *shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be ?* And when upon the Cross, he is not diverted from the same important Subject, though in the midst of the most exquisite Torments, and labouring under a violent Drought. Regard to the Scriptures prevails in his Mind,
more

more than the Sense of the greatest Pain and Anguish ; and not to relieve his Thirst, *but that the Scriptures might be fulfilled*, he cried out, *I thirst.*

THUS our crucified Lord has set the Seal of his Blood to the divine Authority, Excellency, and Certainty of the holy Scriptures. He came into the World, he laid down his Life to accomplish what was fore-ordained, and foretold in the Scriptures. Now this evidently implies, that our Lord knew, and was persuaded, the Scriptures are of divine Original, are the Word, and declare to us the Mind and Will of God ; consequently, that they contain Discoveries and Instructions of the highest and most excellent Nature ; and that all things they predict must, and most certainly will, be accomplished.

IT seems but an inconsiderable Circumstance, that the Scriptures intimate, they would give the *Messiah* in his Thirst Vinegar to drink. This seems to be a Fact of no great Moment, nor do we know that it stood in Connection with any thing of Consequence, and yet our Lord would not overlook it. He took Care it should be punctually fulfilled. How much more then may we persuade ourselves, that all the great Promises, and all the Predictions, relating to Matters of vast Importance, shall be accomplished ? The apparent Insignificancy of Vi-

negar being offered to *Christ* on the Cross, adds great Force to this Argument. If a Point, seemingly so minute, was carefully attended to, and punctually discharged, when the Redeemer was in Extremity of Pain and Torture, how much more, now that he is entered into his Joy ; now that he is possessed of the highest Felicity and Glory ; now that he is invested with the most extensive Power and Dominion ; how much more will he make good all that God has declared by the ancient Prophets in the Old Testament, and all that he himself has foretold and promised in the New, relating to things of infinite Moment ? Exceeding great and precious Promises are given us of the divine Presence, Blessing, and Protection through this World, which every upright Mind may be assured will be fully made good.

How many magnificent Predictions has our Lord, and his Apostles, delivered concerning the World that is to come — *That he will raise us up again at the last Day.* And we shall certainly be raised out of our Graves, and restored to a Life quite different from the present — *That he will come in great Power and Glory to judge the World.* And most assuredly he will so come, and we shall every one of us stand before his Tribunal to give an Account of ourselves — To his faithful Servants *he has promised eternal Life ;*
and

and to all such, without fail, he will give eternal Life. — It is frequently foretold, that *everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord* will be the dreadful Lot of the impenitently wicked, and doubtless everlasting Destruction will be the dreadful Lot of such. — Most clearly he has made known his everlasting Kingdom of Glory, where his sincere Followers shall partake of his Glory and Felicity ; and we may firmly believe and hope, this will be our happy Condition if we make it our present Care to be his sincere Followers. Thus has our benevolent Saviour afforded us, in his last Moments, a most solid Ground of Hope towards God, and directed us absolutely to depend upon all that the Scriptures reveal concerning our Salvation.



C H A P. XLIII.

Christians ought to be thankful for the SCRIPTURES, and maintain a high Esteem for them.

HA V I N G, so far as seems necessary, considered the Use and Importance of the holy Scriptures, I would now point out the properest Improvement of this interesting Subject.

WE may evidently see our Obligation to be thankful for the Scriptures ; they are the Gift of God, and a great Help to our Understanding, and rational Powers in the best Attainments. And as our natural Light and Faculties certainly demand our Gratitude and Thanks, that God has *made us wiser than the Fowls of Heaven, and taught us more than the Beasts of the Earth* ; and as our Joy and Praise will be agreeable to our Illumination, when in God's heavenly Light we shall see glorious and eternal Light ; so the superior Instructions and Discoveries of Revelation do challenge our sincere Thanks to our wise and benevolent Father, who has employed his Spirit at sundry times, and divers manners, to pour Knowledge and Light into the Darkness of the Nations, which otherwise would, in Effect, have generally lost the Use of Intelligence ;

Intelligence ; and that at length he has visited us with the Day-Spring from on High, a full Display of his heavenly Grace in the everlasting Gospel.

SHOULD we not maintain a just, that is to say, a very high Esteem of the Word of God ? If it is true, *that all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for the noblest Ends, for Doctrine, for Reproof, Correction, Instruction in Righteousness*, then it is true that we cannot set too high a Value upon it. The things of this World, which are very imperfect and transitory, have, alas, too large a Share of our Hearts ; but the holy Scriptures are a Treasury of heavenly and everlasting Riches, and it is but reasonable we should give them the Preference to what we know is infinitely inferior in Worth. And it is upon this Ground that the wisest and best of Men have represented them as the highest Object of our Delight and Esteem. *Psalms xix. 7—10. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul ; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart. More to be desired are they than Gold ; yea, than much fine Gold ; sweeter also than Honey, and the Honey-Comb. Psalm cxix. 96, 97, 103. I have seen an End of all Perfection ; but thy Commandment is exceeding broad. O, how love I thy Law ! It is my Meditation all the Day. How sweet*

are thy Words unto my Taste ; yea, sweeter than Honey to my Mouth ! And we may then only call ourselves happy when we have attained the same Sentiments and Taste of the good Word of God. Indeed I cannot see that we use it as what it is, or answer our Christian Profession, if we do not treat it with great Esteem and Regard. To this Purpose let us —

NOT allow ourselves to think of it with Indifference, or in any Respect to treat it irreverently. The Worth, and infinite Importance of the thing will not bear a cool and languid Thought ; and it is too sacred and divine to admit of any Degree of Contempt. It is with some reckoned a Turn of Wit to introduce Scripture Phrase into common Conversation, and to provoke Pleasantry by quoting the Bible. What is this but burlesquing the Word of God, and raising a Laugh at the Expence of the greatest Blessing of Heaven ? Such a prophane Levity will by Degrees lessen the Reverence we owe to Scripture, and destroy all serious Regard to it ; which is, in Effect, to destroy ourselves ; and therefore should not only be carefully avoided, but with Abhorrence detested.

GUARD your Minds well against Deism on the one Hand, and Popery on the other. Both these agree in depreciating the Scriptures. The Deist will persuade you Revelation

tion is unnecessary, and consequently that the Scripture is no Revelation from God, but a Fallacy and Cheat, at first invented, and afterwards supported, by those who find their Account in it. He racks his Invention to start any Difficulty or Objection to prove that the Bible is not sufficient to the Purposes of Revelation. And here, the Romanist joins him. They go indeed different Ways, the one, as he pretends, to the meer Religion of Nature, and the other, in reality, to the Authority of the Church, and a living infallible Guide upon Earth. But both start from the same Point, degrading the holy Scriptures; and I fear very much, they will meet and unite again in a few Generations. For where Deistical Principles prevail in a Family, the rising Generation must grow up in great Ignorance of Revelation, and the true Worship of God, and so will be exposed to the Artifice of the Seducer, who lies in wait to deceive. For however Men may refine in their Speculations, and put a Force upon the most common and obvious Principles in their Minds, yet certainly such is the general Sense of Mankind, when left free and unbiaſſed, with Regard to Religion, that they easily admit the Belief of some superior invisible Powers, and their Intercourse with this World. And being ignorant of the Truth, are with little difficulty drawn into Error.

THIS makes me apprehend that the present Spread of Deism will, in a few Ages, produce a large Increase of Popery among us. Not to say, that Popish Seminaries, where they cannot directly promote the Cause of the Church of ROME, are allowed and instructed to do it in this indirect Way. For Confusion and Ignorance of any kind, is a proper Ground for them to work upon. But this by the Bye. My Design is to guard you against those who would raise Scruples and Prejudices in your Minds against Revelation. And without descending to Particulars, you may be very sure of this one thing, that whoever cavil against the Scriptures are Strangers to them. They object and take upon themselves to judge in a Matter in which they are no ways qualified to be Judges ; in a Matter which they neither understand, nor, in their present way of thinking, ever intend to understand. For, whatever Airs such may give themselves, or what Semblance or Shew soever they make of Knowledge and Wisdom, these Men have never studied the Scriptures ; nor, generally speaking, have they Learning or Capacity to enter into their deep and abstruse Parts. Had they ever soberly and seriously studied the Scriptures, they must of Necessity have found so many, and such evident Marks of a divine Spirit, such glorious Displays of the Wisdom, Power, and Truth of God, as would have taught

taught them to think more modestly of what is doubtful and obscure.

WHEN did you ever hear of any Name, illustrious for Learning and Wisdom, that ever disputed the divine Original and Authority of Scripture? Did ever a BOYLE, a NEWTON, or a LOCKE, question the divine Original and Truth of Scripture? * No.

These

* THE famous SELDEN, one of the most eminent Philosophers, and most learned Men of his Time; who had taken a diligent Survey of Antiquity, and what Knowledge was considerable amongst *Jews, Heathens, and Christians*, and read as much, perhaps, as any Man ever read; towards the End of his Days, declared to Arch-Bishop USHER.

“ THAT notwithstanding he had been so laborious
“ in his Enquiries; and curious in his Collections;
“ and had possessed himself of a Treasure of Books and
“ Manuscripts, upon all ancient Subjects; yet he could
“ *rest his Soul on none save the Scriptures.* And above
“ all, that Passage gave him the most Satisfaction.
“ *Titus ii. 11—14.* as comprizing the Nature, End,
“ and Reward of true Religion.

“ *THE Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath
“ appeared to all Men.*

“ *TEACHING us, that denying Ungodliness, and
“ worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and
“ godly, in this present World.*

“ *LOOKING for that blessed Hope, and the glorious
“ Appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus
“ Christ.*

“ *WHO gave himself for us, that he might redeem us
“ from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar
“ People, zealous of good Works.”*

SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON, a great Statesman, a little before his Death, advised his Relations to be serious

These Men, of the most eminent Attainments in Wisdom and Knowledge, held the Scriptures

rious in searching after the Will of God in his holy Word ; for, said he —

“ It is deservedly accounted a Piece of excellent Knowledge to understand the Laws of the Land, and the Customs of a Man’s Country ; how much more to know the Statutes of Heaven, and the Laws of Eternity, those immutable and eternal Laws of Justice and Righteousness ! To know the Will and Pleasure of the great Monarch, and universal King ! *I have seen an End of all Perfection, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.* Whatever other Knowledge a Man may be endowed withal, could he by a vast and imperious Mind, and a Heart as large as the Sand upon the Sea-Shore, command all the Knowledge of Art and Nature, of Words and Things ; and yet not know the Author of his Being, and the Preserver of his Life, his Sovereign and his Judge, his surest Refuge in Trouble, his best Friend or worst Enemy, the Support of his Life and the Hope of his Death, his future Happiness and his Portion for ever ; he doth but go down to Hell with a great deal of Wisdom.”

MR. LOCKE, also justly esteemed one of the greatest Masters of Reason, and a Philosopher of the greatest Freedom of Thought, at the Close of his Life, thus advised an intimate Friend.

“ STUDY the holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament ; therein are contained the Words of Eternal Life. It hath God for its Author, Salvation for its End, and Truth without any Mixture of Error for its Matter.” *Posthumous Works*, p. 344.

AND to the same Effect, a wiser still in the same Situation, SOLOMON. *To fear God, and keep his Commandments, (in order to which it is necessary, that we read and study them,) is the whole of Man. For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Eccles. xii. 13, 14.

Scriptures in the highest Veneration and Esteem, as a Revelation from God ; and by their excellent Comments have acknowledged the divine Authority even of the most abstruse and difficult Parts. No. The Cavillers against Scripture are Men of an inferior Class, who want, and are no ways solicitous to gain, the Qualifications needful to render them in any Degree fit or competent Judges. It is enough for such to pick up a small Collection of Scruples, to ease themselves of the Trouble of Thought and Study, and at the same time to give a plausible Appearance of both. But with Men of Judgment, such must stand in a very ridiculous Light. To a judicious Physician, how silly and contemptible must a Person be, who, though no ways skilled in the Science, should take upon him perpetually to censure, vilify, and condemn a BOERHAAVE, or a SYDENHAM, the greatest Masters in the Art of Medicine.

PERHAPS you may say—Are there not real Difficulties in the Scriptures ? And will not Difficulties naturally and unavoidably produce Objections ? I answer—There are Difficulties in the Scriptures, and Difficulties are the natural Ground of Objections, but not of destroying any Truth, otherwise well established. For all Science whatever is attended with Difficulties, and Objections may be raised against the clearest and most demonstrable Truths. The Being of God, and his Perfections,

fections, the Creation of the World, the Constitution of Nature, the Ways of Providence, and any the best and most useful Knowledge we can gain, is attended with Difficulties, and consequently liable to Objections. Let it be well observed, those Difficulties arise not from the things themselves, but from the Imperfection of our Minds. In the things themselves there are no Difficulties, nor any Ground for Objection; the Difficulties are in the Narrowness of our Understandings, which find a great Difficulty in comprehending many things relating even to the most certain and undoubted Truths. And, with regard to the Scriptures, I myself have had large Experience of this. Many things which at first, and for some time, appeared to me very obscure, unaccountable, and inconsistent, by patient Application, and a closer Attention, have shone out unclouded into the plainest and clearest Truths. By this I am convinced, that all remaining Difficulties are not so in themselves, but only so with respect to the Imperfection of my Mind. And upon the whole, you may be very sure, when you hear any Objection advanced against the Scriptures, that the Objection, in Truth and Reality, lies against the Objector himself, as he either cannot, or will not, see the Truth as it stands in the Word of God.

BUT

BUT you may say—Why should God put into his Word things to us difficult and obscure? I answer — To exercise our Diligence, and to try our Integrity. I have said so much to convince you of the Vanity and Folly of Deism, and to guard you against any bad Impressions from that Quarter, which may prove of very fatal Consequence. A little of this Leaven may do a great deal of Harm, as it creates an Indifference to divine Knowledge, to the Instructions and Counsels of our heavenly Father; as it takes us off from the study of the Scriptures, robs us of the best Guide of our Actions, the most powerful Motives to all Virtue, the strongest Consolations in every Day of Affliction; and at last exposes to the righteous Judgment of God, for the Neglect and Contempt of the best of Blessings he ever bestowed upon the World.

WE have the strongest Reason to be fully satisfied of the Sufficiency of Scripture, as perfectly able to make us wise unto Salvation. The Papist will own the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and a true Rule of Faith, but not a sufficient Rule. The only sufficient Rule of Faith, he will tell you, is the Church of ROME, which infallibly understands, and propounds what the Christian World is to believe and do in order to eternal Salvation; and therefore you ought implicitly to submit your Understanding and
Conscience

Conscience to her Direction and Decisions ; and doing so, you have no need to consult the Scriptures, being already provided with a living infallible Guide. But if the Scriptures are a true Rule of Faith, then are they a sufficient Rule to all Sorts and Degrees of Persons, for they expressly affirm their own Sufficiency in this extensive Sense.

THAT nothing but Scripture is a sufficient Ground to build our Faith and Practice upon, as Christians, will clearly appear to any considerate Person. All besides is Uncertainty and Confusion. You have Popes against Popes, Councils against Councils, Fathers against Fathers, the Church of one Age against the Church of another Age, and Tradition passing through Hands so uncertain and inconsistent, must of Necessity lose all Force of Evidence. Only upon the Rock of Scripture can we find any Rest for the Sole of our Feet ; and there we have a firm Foundation, and a sure infallible Guide, which we may with the greatest Certainty and Stedfastness oppose to the Authority of the Church of ROME.

WHATEVER may be pretended to gain that Church the Credit of a Guide, all that, and much more may be said for the Scriptures. Has the Church of ROME been ancient ? The Scriptures are more ancient. Is that Church a Means to keep Christians in Unity ? So is the Scriptures to preserve Unity
of

of Belief in things necessary and plainly revealed, and in Unity of Charity in other Matters. Following the Scriptures, we shall follow that which must be true, if the Church of ROME be true, for she owns the Truth of Scripture. Whereas if we follow that Church, we follow that which, if the Scriptures be true, may be false; nay, which if the Scriptures be true, must be false, because the Scriptures testify against it. We have God's express Command to follow the Scriptures, and no Intimation or Colour of any Prohibition; but to believe in the Church of ROME we have no Command at all, much less an express Command. Nay, on the contrary, we have a general Prohibition in these Words, *Call no Man Master upon Earth.*

FOLLOWING the Scriptures we shall embrace a Religion, which being contrary to Flesh and Blood, without any Assistance from worldly Power; Wisdom, or Policy, nay, against all the Power and Policy of the World, prevailed and spread itself in a short time, over a very great Part of the World. Whereas it is apparent the Church of ROME has got, and still maintains her Authority over Mens Consciences by counterfeiting false Miracles, forging false Histories, corrupting the Monuments of former times, by Wars, by Persecutions, by Massacres, by Treasons, by Rebellions; in short, by all manner of carnal

carnal unjustifiable Means, whether violent or fraudulent.

FOLLOWING the Scriptures, we shall believe a Religion the first Preachers and Professors whereof could certainly have no worldly Ends ; could neither project, nor promise to themselves by it any of the Profits, Honours, or Pleasures of this World, but rather the contrary, even all the Hardships the World could lay upon them. On the other hand, the Head of the Church of ROME, the pretended Vicar of Christ, Successor of the Apostles, and Guide of Faith, it is palpably evident, makes the Popish Religion the Instrument of his Ambition, to gratify the Lust of Dominion, by subjecting the Consciences of all Mankind to his Authority, and all Nations to his Jurisdiction. Besides, it is evident to any Man, who has but half an Eye, that most of those Doctrines, which the Romish Church addeth to the Scriptures, are, one Way or other, calculated to promote the Honour or temporal Profit of the Teachers of them.

FOLLOWING the Scriptures only, we shall embrace a Religion of perfect Simplicity and Purity ; consisting, in a manner, wholly in the Worship of God in Spirit and Truth, and in sincere Obedience to his Will. Whereas the Roman Church, and Doctrine, is loaded with an Infinity of weak, childish, ridiculous

ridiculous Superstitions and Ceremonies, and the most gross and manifest Idolatry. If we follow the Scriptures, we must not promise ourselves Salvation without forsaking effectually, and mortifying all Vices, and practising sincerely all Christian Virtues, which our Reason tells us is the only Way in which we can secure the Favour of God, and our own Happiness. But the Church of ROME opens an easier and broader Way to Heaven, and though a Man continues all his Life long in a Course of Sin, gives him Assurance he may be let into Heaven by a back Gate, even by an Act of Attrition, at the Hour of Death, if it be joined with Confession to a Priest, or by an Act of Contrition without it.

JUST and perfect are the Precepts of Piety and Humility, of Innocence and Patience, of Goodness, Temperance, Sobriety, Justice, Meekness, Fortitude, and Constancy, Contempt of the World, the Love of God, and of Mankind; in a Word, of all Virtues, and against all Vices, which the Scriptures oblige us to observe and obey, as ever we hope to see God in his heavenly Kingdom; which if they were generally obeyed, could not but make the World generally happy; and the Goodness of them alone is sufficient to make any wise and good Man believe, that the Religion, which obliges to them, comes from God the Fountain of all Goodness.

The Church of ROME enervates, and in a manner dissolves and abrogates many of the holy Precepts of the Gospel, by teaching Men, that they are not Laws for all Christians, but Counsels of Perfection, and Matters of Supererogation, which a Man should do well, if he observes, but shall not sin, if he doth not observe them ; that they are for those who aim at high Places in Heaven, but if a Man will be content with an inferior Situation there, especially if he will be content to taste of Purgatory in the Way, he need not incumber his Thoughts at present with many of the Rules of the Gospel. Not to say, that the *Romish* Church manifestly foment a Spirit of Uncharitableness and Cruelty to all Mankind, not of her Profession. Therefore the Religion of this Church is far from being so holy or so good as the Doctrine of Christ delivered in the Scriptures, and consequently cannot come from the same Fountain of Holiness and Goodness.

FOLLOWING the Church of ROME for our Guide, we shall only follow a Combination of deluded Men, who have fast closed their Eyes, and are not at Liberty to open them, or to examine and consider whether they are in the right or no. For that Papists have no Liberty of Judgment is manifest, because they reckon it a mortal Sin to *doubt of any Part of their Doctrine*. Whence it follows, that seeing every Man must resolve
that

that he will never commit mortal Sin, that he must never examine the Grounds of Popery at all, for fear he should be moved to doubt; or if he do examine, he must before resolve that no Evidence, not even of Scripture, no Motives, be they ever so strong, shall move him to doubt, lest he should fall into mortal Sin.

SEEING this is the Condition of all who are esteemed good Catholicks, who can deny that they are a Sett of Men unwilling and afraid to understand; that have Eyes to see and will not, that have not the Love of the Truth, but are given over to strong Delusion? And therefore in following such a Church, and such Guides, we shall only follow the Blind, and with them fall into the Ditch. If we follow the Scriptures, we shall follow only the Truth; we shall follow a Guide which exhorts us to keep our Eyes always open to the Truth, to try all things, and to hold fast only that which is good; to try every Spirit, and to bring every Doctrine to the Test of God's pure and holy Word. And thus we are at Liberty to review the Ground upon which we stand, to correct any Error, and to improve our Minds in the Knowledge and Love of the Truth.

IN these, and several other Respects, the Sufficiency of Scripture, to guide us in the way of Life and Salvation, is evidently seen, and how foolish and unsafe it is to forsake

this heavenly Guide, and follow the Delusions of the Church of ROME. But then, the greater the Evidence that Scripture is a perfect Guide to eternal Life, the greater must our Obligations be to use it faithfully as such.

LET us be much in reading the Scriptures ; and think and judge freely. By judging freely, I do not mean rashly, and at random. We must judge of the Scriptures with all possible Care and Caution. But judge freely, without regard to the Authority of any Person, Party, or Church whatsoever. We are made by our gracious Creator for the Knowledge of the Truth ; not to be the Dupes of Custom or Authority, not blindly to follow the Dictates, Decrees, and Constitutions of weak and ambitious Men ; but imploy our Minds generously in the Search and Knowledge of the Truth. Christianity calls us to the noblest Exercise of our Understanding, and we lose the Benefit of it, if we do not think seriously, and judge freely.

THERE is no other Way of having our Minds established, and well seasoned with the Principles of our Religion. In this Way we shall see the Glory and Excellency of the holy Scriptures ; thus we shall feel the Power of God's Word upon our Hearts ; thus our Understandings will gradually be enlightened with divine Knowledge, and, to our unspeakable Comfort, grow up into Jesus Christ, and gain the Happiness of the Man, who forsaking

faking all Impiety, and every false Way, delights himself in the Law of the Lord, and daily meditates therein. Such a one is under the special Blessing of Heaven, and, like a Tree planted in a fruitful Soil, shall grow and flourish, and rise infinitely higher than all the Honours, Wealth, and Enjoyments of this World ; he shall rise to Immortality, and there find all the glorious Fruits of a Life of Piety, and the full Accomplishment of the magnificent Promises which here on Earth he with Pleasure perused in the Word of God.

THIS is what I have to offer on this important Subject. Whatever the Result may be, with Regard to others, this one Point is sufficiently secured—I have satisfied my Conscience by discharging what I esteem an incumbent Duty ; and I have done it in the Faithfulness and Integrity of my Heart, according to the Wisdom God has given me.



A P P E N D I X.

Chronological Dates for Chapters xxxiv. xxxv. and xxxvi.

C H A P. XXXIV.

PROPHETS *before the* CAPTIVITY.

Years
before
Christ.

812	A Maziah King of Judah Jeroboam II. King of Israel }	Jonah sent with a Message. 2 Kings xiii. 20. xiv. 25.
800	Uzziah King of Judah Jeroboam II. }	Joel i. ii. iii.
800	Jeroboam II. King of Israel Uzziah King of Judah }	Amos i—ix.
800	Jeroboam II. Uzziah	Hosea i. ii. iii.
772	Menahem I.	Hosea iv.
770	Menahem II.	Jonah i. ii. iii. iv.
759	Uzziah 52. Pekah 1.	Isaiah vi. ii. iii. iv. v.
753	Jotham 5. Pekah 7.	Micah i. ii.
742	Ahaz 1. Pekah 18.	Isaiah vii.
	In the same Year	Isaiah viii. ix. x.
	In the same Year	Isaiah xvii.
740	Ahaz 3. Pekah 20.	Isaiah i.
	In the same Year	Isaiah xxviii.
739	Aphaz 4.	Hosea v. vi.
726	Hezekiah 2.	Isaiah xiv. Ver. 28, &c.
	In the same Year	Isaiah xv. xvi.
725	Hezekiah 3. Hosea 6.	{ Hosea vii—xiv. Micah iii. iv. v. vi. vii.
720	Hezekiah 7.	Nahum i. ii. iii.
715	Hezekiah 13.	Isaiah xxiii—xxvii.
714	Hezekiah 14.	Isaiah xxxviii. xxxix.
714	Hezekiah 14.	Isaiah xxix. xxx— xxxv.

Isaiah

PROPHETS *before the* CAPTIVITY. 487

Years
before
Christ.

	In the same Year	Isaiah xxii. Ver. 1— 15.
	In the same Year	Isaiah xxi.
713	Hezekiah 15.	Isaiah xx.
	In the same Year	Isaiah xviii. xix.
710	Hezekiah 18.	Isaiah x. Ver 5, &c. xi. xii. xiii. xiv. Ver. 28, &c.
	In the same Year	Isaiah xxxvi. xxxvii.
	In the same Year	Isaiah xl—xliii; &c.
698	Manasseh 1.	Isaiah xxii. Ver. 15.
628	Josiah 13.	Jeremiah i. ii.
623	Josiah 18.	Jeremiah xi. Ver. 1 —18. Jeremiah iii—x. xii —xxi. Jeremiah xi. Ver. 18, &c.
611	Josiah 31.	Habakkuk i. ii. iii. Zephaniah i. ii. iii.
610	Jehoiakim 1.	Jeremiah xxii. Ver. 1—24.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxvi.
606	Jehoiakim 4.	Jeremiah xxv.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxv.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xlvi.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxvi. Ver. 1—9.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xlv.
	In the same Year	Daniel i.
605	Jehoiakim 5.	Jeremiah xxxvi. Ver. 9, &c.
603	Jehoiakim 7.	Daniel ii.
599	Zedekiah 1.	Jeremiah xxii. Ver. 24, &c.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxiii.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xiii. Ver. 13, &c.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxiv.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xlix. Ver. 34, &c.
598	Zedekiah 2.	Jeremiah xxix.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxx. xxxi.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxvii. Jeremiah

488 PROPHETS *before the* CAPTIVITY.

Years
before
Christ.

596	Zedekiah 4.	Jeremiah xxviii.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah l. li.
595	Zedekiah 5. Jehoiachin's Capt. 5.	Ezekiel i.—vii.
594	Zedekiah 6. Jehoiachin's Capt. 6.	Ezekiel viii.—xi.
593	Zedekiah 7. Jehoiachin's Capt. 7.	Ezekiel xii.—xix.
	In the same Year, fifth Month	Ezekiel xx—xxiii.
591	Zedekiah 9. Jehoiachin's Capt. 9.	Jeremiah xxi. xxxiv.
		Ver. 1—8.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xlvii.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xlviii. xlix.
		Ver. 1—34.
	In the same Year	Ezekiel xxiv. xxv.
590	Zedekiah 10. Jehoiachin's Capt. 10.	Jeremiah xxxvii.
		Ver. 1—11.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxiv. Ver.
		8, &c.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxvii.
		Ver. 11—16.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxii.
		xxxiii.
	In the same Year	Ezekiel xxix. Ver.
		1—17. xxx.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxvii.
		Ver. 17, &c.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxviii.
		Ver. 1—14.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxix.
		Ver. 15, &c.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxviii.
		Ver. 14, &c.
589	Zedekiah 11. Jehoiachin's Capt. 11.	Ezekiel xxxvi.
	first Month.	xxxvii. xxxviii.
	In the same Year, third Month	Ezekiel xxxi.
	In the same Year, fourth Month	Jeremiah xxxix. Ver.
		1—11. lii. Ver. 1
		—30.
	In the same Year, fifth or sixth Month.	Jeremiah xxxix. Ver.
		11—15. xl. Ver.
		1—7.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xl. Ver. 7.
		xli. xlii. xlii. xliii.
		Ver. 1—8.

C H A P. XXXV.

PROPHETS *after the Destruction of the TEM-
PLE, during the CAPTIVITY.*

Years
before
Christ.

588	J ehoiachin's Capt. 12. tenth	Ezekiel xxxiii.
	Month	
	In the same Year, twelfth Month	Ezekiel xxxii.
	Between the 12 and 25 Captivity	Ezekiel xxxiv. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix.
	In the same Year	Obadiah
	In the same Year	Ezekiel xxxv.
	In this Year Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden Image	Daniel iii.
754	Jehoiachin's Captivity 25.	Ezekiel xl. xli. &c.
569	Jehoiachin's Captivity 30.	Ezekiel xxix. Ver. 17, &c.
	In the same Year	Daniel iv.
562	Jehoiachin's Captivity 37.	Jeremiah lii. Ver. 31, &c.
555	Belshazzar 1.	Daniel vii.
553	Belshazzar 3.	Daniel viii.
539	Belshazzar 17.	Daniel v.
538	Darius the Mede 1.	Daniel vi.
	In the same Year	Daniel ix.
536	Cyrus 1.	Ezra i. ii.
535	Cyrus 2.	Ezra iii.

C H A P. XXXVI:

PROPHETS *after the CAPTIVITY, under the second TEMPLE.*

Years
before
Christ.

535	CYRUS 2. In the third Year of Cyrus, and third after the Captivity	Ezra iv. Daniel x. xi. xii.
520	Darius Hystaspes 2. sixth Month	Haggai i. Ver. 1—12.
	In the same Year and Month	Haggai i. Ver. 12, &c. Ezra v.
	In the same Year, seventh Month	Haggai ii. Ver. 1—10.
	In the same Year, eighth Month	Zechariah i. Ver. 1—7.
	In the same Year, ninth Month	Haggai ii. Ver. 10, &c.
	In the same Year, eleventh Month	Zechariah i. Ver. 7, &c. ii—vi.
516	Darius 3.	Ezra v. Ver. 3, &c.
518	Darius 4. In the same Year, ninth Month	Ezra vi. Ver 1—15.
	Subsequent to the fourth Year of Darius Hystaspes	Zechariah vii. viii.
515	Darius 6.	Zechariah ix—xiv.
462	Ahasuerus 3.	Ezra vi. Ver. 15, &c.
461	Ahasuerus 4.	Esther i.
458	Ahasuerus 7.	Esther ii. Ver. 1—16.
	In the same Year	Ezra vii—x.
457	Ahasuerus 8.	Esther ii. Ver. 16—21.
453	Ahasuerus 12.	Esther ii. Ver. 21, &c.
445	Ahasuerus 20.	Esther iii. iv. v, &c.
433	Ahasuerus 32.	Nehemiah i—iii &c.
429	Ahasuerus 36.	Nehemiah xiii. Ver. 6.
428	Ahasuerus 37.	Malachi i—iv.
		Nehemiah xiii. Ver. 6, &c.
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